

Adult Volunteer Leader Guide
4-H Leadership Project



iChampion



Companion to *iThrive*
Member Guide for the
Leadership Project

Acknowledgements

iChampion reflects the work of.....

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-Gemma Miner

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Toward Thriving

Background

At its core, 4-H creates a community of youth where young people feel and know that they are persons of value and worth; know that they have the capacity to reach their full potential; and contribute something positive to the world. You know that the work you do improves the lives of young people, but now we want to standardize our program and prove to others how much of a difference you make.


This is critical for 4-H because the reality is public dollars are driven by proven methods; benefactors want to know that you can prove what you say you do with young people. As a part of the land grant University system, we have a responsibility to share our learning and skills with the greater community. When we prove our work, we are more likely to receive continuous and sustainable community support.

To help us reach the goal of standardizing and proving to others that we have a significant impact on young people's lives, we have partnered with the Thrive Foundation for Youth and created 4-H Thrive, based on the Step-it-Up-2-Thrive theory of change model as presented by the Thrive Foundation for Youth. The model reflects researched components and promising practice in the field of youth development. There are four components to the 4-H Thrive Model.

- Sparks: inner passions, interests and skills; we use our sparks to make a difference in the world
- Growth Mindset: effort is more important than getting something right or wrong; view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow
- GPS Goal Management: easily remembered system of goal management that includes Goal Setting (G), Pursuit of Strategies (P), and Shifting Gears (S)
- 6 Cs: indicators of thriving include competence, confidence, caring, character, connection, and contribution

The goal is to move this cutting edge youth development approach into best practices, evaluate the program and make changes as needed, and have the California 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) lead the way in these efforts—working to advance the field of Positive Youth Development and provide a template for other states to follow. We have this great vision that the California 4-H YDP be recognized in all our communities and across the country as a leader in Positive Youth Development.





For young people, 4-H Thrive develops a specific set of skills based on scientific research that we know helps move young people on a path to thriving. It provides an intentional model of positive youth development. It also provides planned volunteer training, tools, and support for you all to do your work better. It standardizes training across the state so that we know the training a volunteer receives in Santa Barbara is the same training a volunteer receives in Humboldt.

This *iChampion Adult Volunteer Leader Guide* is a resource for 4-H adult volunteers who provide the leadership for a Leadership Project. We welcome you on your journey to help young people reach their full potential and thrive! There is also a member guide just for youth called *iThrive*.

iChampion guides you through each step of the *iThrive Member Guide* designed for the Leadership Project. Each chapter of *iChampion* provides detailed information on concepts of thriving. If you want to learn more about any of these concepts, the Resources section on page 67 provides additional support and information to increase your knowledge and skills.



About *iThrive*—the Leadership Project Member Guide

1. *iThrive* is designed specifically for Junior and Teen Leaders. All Junior and Teen Leaders should be enrolled in a Leadership Project—and follow *iThrive* throughout their year-long project.
2. Each chapter guides youth through promising practices of thriving and is related to the four components of thriving. In addition, the first two chapters are based on more general best practices in positive youth development.
3. *iThrive* is sequential. Each chapter is in the order it must be taught. Chapters one and two are about creating safety and relationships. These are important first steps to set the groundwork for the following chapters.
4. There are four chapters that help build specific skills toward thriving: Light Your Spark, Flex Your Brain, Reach your Goals, and Am I Thriving Now?
5. The final chapter is about celebrating success.
6. Each chapter has the following features:
 - a. Key ideas about the topic
 - b. iexplore activity (hands-on learning about the topic)
 - c. ireflect activity (internalize and personalize what was learned)
 - d. istretch activity (apply what was learned)
7. The iexplore activities are designed to be completed as a group during the Leadership Project meeting.
8. The ireflect exercises are **best** done during the Leadership Project meeting, but can be done individually between meetings if time constraints require it.
9. The istretch activities can be done at the Leadership Project meeting or individually between meetings.
10. If an ireflect and/or istretch are done independently **always** begin the next meeting with a discussion of what was learned.
11. When youth complete *iThrive* and the 4-H Online Record Book, they are eligible to be awarded a 4-H Thrive pin in recognition of their effort! This is an annual award and can be achieved multiple times.



About *iChampion*—the Adult Volunteer Leader Guide to *iThrive*

1. *iChampion* is arranged so that each chapter number matches a corresponding chapter in *iThrive*.
2. The Toward Thriving section—that's the one you're reading now—has information that will be helpful for you to know before getting started. Read this first section completely and ensure that you are aware of the practices, policies, and resources available here.
3. Each chapter of *iChampion* provides:
 - a. the main point of the chapter
 - b. a Chapter Checklist section with a step-by-step walkthrough of that chapter
 - c. complete activity descriptions
 - d. background information about the concept so that you have the knowledge and tools to help the youth members in your project
4. Before each meeting of the Leadership Project, read the *iThrive* chapter and the *iChampion* chapter that will be the focus of the upcoming meeting. Be sure you understand the activities, exercises, and discussions, plus the key concepts and applied science.
5. Gather supplies that you will need for each meeting. In some cases, equipment is available for check out through your UCCE County 4-H Office. Other supplies are inexpensive and readily available.
6. Ask for help if you need it. You can talk to your county staff member or members of the Master Trainer team.



Risk Management

Before you begin working with Junior and Teen Leaders verify that they have completed the enrollment process and submitted payment for program fees to the UCCE County 4-H Office. This is necessary to ensure that they are covered with accident/illness insurance. Also, make sure that you obtain a signed medical release and health history form for each member in the project. These forms should be kept in a file or notebook that can only be accessed by 4-H adult volunteers. This will help protect and respect the privacy of privileged and sensitive health information. Medical release forms should be onsite during all project meetings, events, and activities that occur within and outside the county. Likewise, be sure that you have completed the enrollment process and received your official 4-H volunteer appointment card before beginning the project. This will assure that you are covered with accident/illness and automobile and general liability insurance.

Members participating in this project should have enrolled in a 4-H Leadership Project. As with all projects, a minimum of six hours of educational instruction is required to complete this project. The educational materials offer you at least six hours of new, fun, and engaging activities designed to help young people reach their full potential and thrive. However, before you begin there are a few other things to keep in mind.

California 4-H Policies require that there be two adult volunteers with youth members at all times. We realize that in some occasions it may be impractical to have two appointed volunteers present and in these situations there should be one appointed adult volunteer and another adult or 4-H staff member present (one of which must be at least 21 years of age). In general, no one-on-one interactions should occur in private. Throughout the project there may be a need to meet individually with project members so be sure that either another adult is present or that the discussion occurs in a place where you are visible to others.

Also, if the need to transport youth members arises please remember that adult volunteers should not be one-on-one in a vehicle with members other than their own child. And, keep in mind that 4-H youth members including Junior and Teen Leaders are **not** authorized to drive on behalf of the 4-H Youth Development Program and shall not transport other members to and from any 4-H function.



Creating a safe environment is critical to healthy development. 4-H youth members need to feel that they are physically safe and protected from harm. As a 4-H adult volunteer you are responsible for the safety of members during all meetings and activities. So, prior to meeting, it is prudent and recommended that you evaluate the configuration, accommodations, limitations, and hazards of the space. Once these aspects of the meeting space have been evaluated, then you can provide instructions, guidelines, or other information to manage the meeting and space as appropriate.

If for some reason an unacceptable risk or hazard becomes evident while an activity is taking place, promptly modify the activity, establish controls to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, and/or correct the hazard. You may always discontinue the activity. Several resources have been developed to help you create physically safe environments (see 4-H Safety Manual and Cover Safe Notes at www.safety.ucanr.org/4-H_Resources/).

In Chapter 2 of *iThrive*, the *istretch* activity includes taking a field trip to a local ropes course or team's course. During this activity, it will be important to remember all the safety information and tips we just discussed. If challenge or ropes courses are the destination be sure that approved helmets are worn by all participants in or around high challenge/ropes course elements (i.e., above the participant's height) and climbing harnesses are used. The course shall adhere to the standards established by the Professional Ropes Course Association (PCRA) or similar guidelines and facilitators who lead the course must have training and experiences that meets accepted safety standards from organizations such as PCRA. Be SAFE and HAVE FUN!

Finally, as Junior and Teen Leaders, members have sufficient knowledge and experience to function in teaching and administrative roles, but they are unable to assume the responsibilities of adult volunteers. 4-H adult volunteers must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by Junior and Teen Leaders.



Sample Meeting Plans

One Hour Meeting

Greet members (5 minutes)

Check-in circle (10 minutes)

- Evaluate how we're doing on Rights and Responsibilities
- Share appreciations for each other
- Share or review irectect or irstretch activities from the last meeting

Chapter of the Day (40 minutes)

- Complete at least one iexplore and one irectect together
- If time permits, do the irstretch activity or other leadership project business

One and a half Hour Meeting

Greet members (5 minutes)

Check-in circle (10 minutes)

- Evaluate how we're doing on Rights and Responsibilities
- Share appreciations for each other
- Share or review irectect or irstretch activities from the last meeting

Chapter of the Day (60 minutes)

- Complete one iexplore, one irectect, and one irstretch together

Other project business (15 minutes)

Tip: Be sure to have notebook paper at each meeting just in case a member forgets their *iThrive Member Guide*. They can look on with another member and complete the reflections or written exercises on plain paper and then insert their work in their own magazine at a later time.



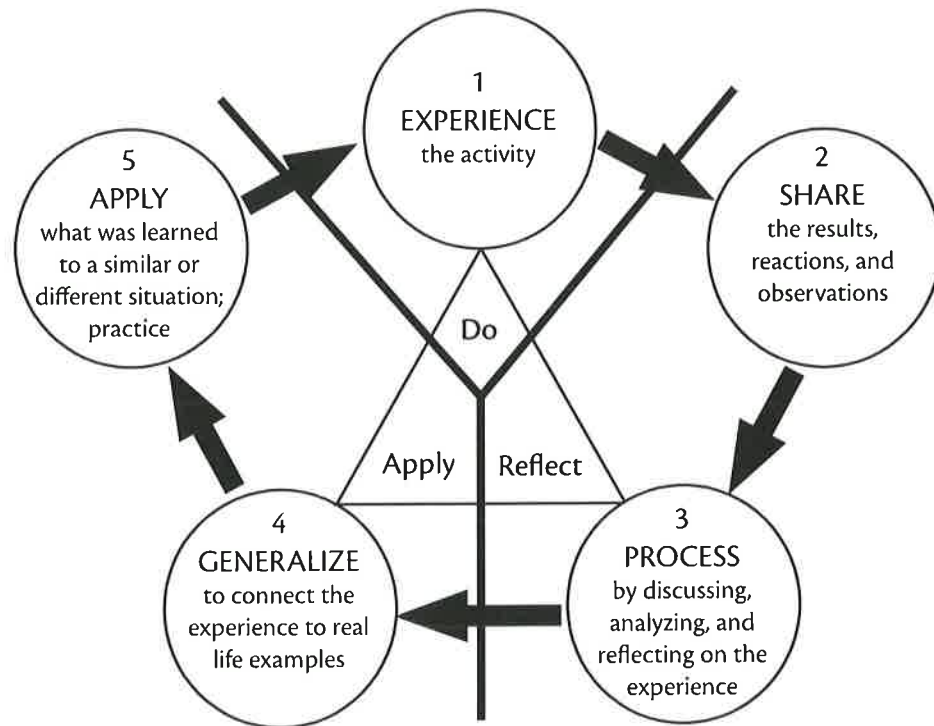
Meeting Year Calendar

September	New year paperwork & details; Review <i>iThrive</i> Introduction, Name Game (in Chapter 1)
October	Be Safe, Feel Safe
November	Got Connections?
December	Light Your Spark
January	Flex Your Brain, Meeting A
February	Flex Your Brain, Meeting B
March	Reach Your Goals (Goal Selection and Pursue Strategies)
April	Reach Your Goals (Shifting Gears)
May	Am I Thriving Now?
June	Review and Celebrate



Experiential Learning Cycle

You may remember hearing about experiential learning at your 4-H Adult Volunteer Orientation Training. It is important to understand this model because the 4-H YDP is based on a proven experiential learning model. It creates an educational climate through planned learning by exploring, doing, and reflection. The activities and exercises in the Leadership Project are built around concepts and steps of this model.



Pfeiffer, J. W., & Ballew, A. C. (1988). Using structured experiences in human resource development (UATT Series, Vol. 1). San Diego, CA: University Associates.

The **experience** begins with an activity! This will be either an individual or a group activity. As an adult volunteer you can answer questions youth members may have, and it's important that you let them come to the solution or conclusion themselves. Youth members need to be independent with activities since it will help them become independent experiential learners.

After the **experience**, get the group or individuals to **share what happened**. This includes their reactions, observations, and/or results. Make sure you're asking them **what happened**. What were some of the difficult/easy things in the activity? Use open-ended questions so that answers are not a simple "yes" or "no". Open-ended questions usually start with "What...", "How...", "Tell me about..."



Process the activity by discussing, analyzing, reflecting, and looking at the experience. Youth members should talk about challenges and themes that were highlighted during the experience. Continue asking open-ended questions that will help youth members analyze the activity in depth.

Generalize the experience to the real world. **So what** can be learned from the experience/activity? Identify real life principles that youth can learn from the experience.

Apply what has been learned to an everyday or prospective life experience. **What** can such learning provide youth members? Practice what was learned and apply it to similar and/or different situations.

Remember: Only providing a hands-on learning experience does not count as experiential learning. The experience always comes first. Learning, however, comes from ideas created in **sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying the experience.**



The Value of Reflection

In modern-day society people are not taught to be reflective learners. We live in a society that consumes every aspect of our lives, leaving very little time for what we should be doing—reflecting.

In order to become better learners, leaders should make time for reflection. Research has shown that when we allow time for reflection and use effective techniques, we learn better. This is not just beneficial for our brain, but necessary.

Scientific truths like increasing member feedback and reflection not only support experiential education, but emphasize the value of creating ways to help youth members reflect on them. This produces an increase in positive learning.

Leaders are often so **extremely** motivated by exciting and engaging group challenges that they often do not make time for what they consider the less engaging task of debriefing. Although processing activities can be a little dry at times, it can also be engaging. Reflection is not only a process by which ideas come together, but it builds our ability to produce insight.

Facilitator Tips

Allow group members to pass. This will help them trust the facilitator and the group. Members will offer insight in a group setting when they are ready.

Help your group create a model for appropriate behavior during group activities and discussions. For example, you may want to create some group agreements about appropriate behavior before beginning the activity. You can refer back to the group agreements as necessary. This increases the amount of sharing as well as interaction within a group. Also, it increases opportunities for reflection.

Begin reflection activities with simple conversational prompts. For example, you could start the conversation by saying, “While you were doing this activity, I noticed...Would someone share with the group something you noticed?” This leads to more in-depth discussions. Reflection is an art that needs to be practiced both by the member and facilitator.



Allow for superficial answers and comments during reflection activities.

REMEMBER: This is a practice exercise. When people begin to reflect they might start with surface-level comments and observations. Persevere! As group members develop continued participation, the level of sharing and reflection increases.

Silence is okay, even necessary. Allow time for group members to think and formulate their ideas.

Look for teachable moments. It can be effective to reflect at different times during the program depending on the group and situation. Always remember that structured reflection doesn't need to happen with every activity.

Mix up your methods. According to scientific brain research, novelty and use of different learning tools/methods facilitates learning.

Processing can happen any time. Sometimes a group will experience a teachable moment in the midst of problem solving. A brain-based learning approach shows that immediate feedback and reflection during this time can be valuable.

Treat debriefing activities as a fun and engaging event. Debriefing is not just something you do after the fun engaging activity is over!

Empower participants. Be careful not to force your own agenda, opinions, and/or judgments on them. Go with the flow and be flexible. Let them take charge of their learning.

Allow the group to self-process. At times it is helpful to divide the group into smaller, more individualistic groups. This helps members feel more comfortable with expressing an opinion.

Take risks. Experiment. Allow for an activity to be unsuccessful. There are always new things to be learned by experiencing mistakes through reflection, allow this to happen.

The Value of Reflection is adapted from: Cain J., Cummings M., & Staunchfield, J. (2008). *A teachable moment: A facilitator's guide to activities for processing, debriefing, reviewing and reflection*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt. ISBN 0-7872-4532-1



Measuring Success

Did you know that 4-H is a part of a national system of land grant universities? This is important to know because one of the most important things that land grant universities do is share current research with their communities. As a result, communities are healthier and stronger. In 4-H we share what we know about youth development: what works, what's new, and what's promising.

One of the ways that we know what works and the impact of 4-H on youth development is by tracking the progress that youth experience. Tracking progress also allows us to continually improve 4-H programs based on real results. Adults play a key role in tracking progress. Your view of how each youth is growing is important to record because young people sometimes need help to identify their growth and challenges. So, both you and the youth will complete surveys twice a year.

We will be asking youth to tell us things about themselves by answering questions in the 4-H Online Record Book. We are calling these questions "Sparks Questions" although the questions they complete will be related to each of the components of thriving and how those components are connected (or not) to their 4-H experiences.

Youth will need to complete "Sparks Questions" as prompted by their 4-H Online Record Book twice a year: once at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. Youth earn points for completing each group of questions and are eligible for prizes once certain levels are achieved. One of your jobs related to youth surveys is to remind youth members in your Leadership Project to complete Sparks Questions in a timely fashion.

Each adult Project Leader and Co-Leader(s) will need to complete "Spark Champion Questions" for at least three youth, twice a year, as prompted by your own page in the 4-H Online Record Book. Spark Champion Questions include GPS Rubrics and 6 Cs Rubrics. The GPS Rubrics are in two versions; one version is for 10-13 year olds and the second version is for 14-19 year olds. Your 4-H Online Record Book will automatically select the version you will need to use based upon the ages of the youth that you have selected. The 6 Cs Rubrics are the same for all, regardless of age.

Choose three youth who are different from each other. For example: you could choose a boy and two girls; the girls can be different ages. Oh course, you can always do more than three. We expect that you will see so much value in this process that you will want to reflect on the skills of all the youth in the Leadership Project!



Before you begin the GPS lessons in Chapter Five, you will need to take the GPS webinar course. This course will help you understand how to complete the GPS and 6 Cs rubrics. After you have completed the GPS webinar, you will then complete a baseline “Spark Champion Questions” for your selected youth. This guided reflection process will help hone your observation skills.

You will meet individually with at least three Junior or Teen Leader twice during the year to have conversations about where they want to go on their path toward thriving. The best time to do this is about halfway through the project year and at the end of the project year. You will NOT directly share your answers with youth members, but the information will help you have intentional growth conversations with them. Use the sample Rubrics in the Appendix on page 80 to help structure the conversations. The goal of these conversations is to help youth to reflect on their skills. Use the Tips for Goal Setting Conversations on page 49.

Young people will record these progress meetings in their iThrive Member Guide and ask for your signature.

Finally, you will be asked to provide feedback at the end of the year. An important part of evaluating the program is knowing what you felt worked and did not work and gathering your suggestions for improving the program in terms of the educational materials, structure, your training, etc.

See the Yearly Timeline on page 16.



4-H Online Record Book Data Collection Tools

At-a-Glance

	October-January	April - June
Youth complete:	"C" surveys as assigned ** Flex Your Brain How Do I Feel? Light Your Spark Reach Your Goals	"C" surveys as assigned ** Flex Your Brain How Do I Feel? Light Your Spark Reach Your Goals
Adult Volunteers complete:	Rubric Calibration Course† "C" Rubric as assigned ** GPS Rubric Survey (for at least 3 youth)	"C" Rubric as assigned ** GPS Rubric (for the same 3 youth)

† Must be completed before starting GPS Rubric and C Rubric.

** Each year one of the 6 Cs will be pre-selected by the State 4-H Office for completion by all youth and adults. In addition, each youth member and adult will have a randomly selected "C" from the remaining five Cs survey to complete each year. For example, Contribution is the pre-selected "C" for the 2011-2012 program year.



Preparation:
4-H Thrive Training (3hrs)

Date Completed:

Preparation:
Webinar Training for GPS Rubric and Scoring Calibration

Date Completed:

Adult Volunteers Rubric Schedule



Leadership Project Members Surveys Schedule

Complete all of the baseline surveys on your 4-H Online Record Book

Includes: Light Your Spark, Flex Your Brain, Reach Your Goals, How I Feel, and C Rubrics.

All surveys must be submitted to be eligible for iThrive Pin

Complete all of the surveys posted on your 4-H Online Record Book

Includes: Light Your Spark, Flex Your Brain, Reach Your Goals, How I Feel, and C Rubrics.

All surveys must be submitted to be eligible for iThrive Pin

Timeline

Chapter 1

What's the Point?

The first chapter in *iThrive* is about emotional and physical safety. Creating a safe space is critical for project meetings, especially when encouraging young people to openly talk about their dreams, hopes, and innermost aspirations. When young people feel safe, they are ready to make friends and build their skills.

Project Leader Tips...

Establish safety the first one or two meetings of the project year.

Spend a minute or two at the beginning of each meeting to “take the safety temperature in the room.” If something doesn’t feel right check in with the group and see what you can do together to create a safe meeting place again.

Each time a new member joins the project, you have a “new” group. Safety for this new group needs to be re-established. You can do this by having another youth mentor the new youth and guide them through the activities you have already done to establish safety. You will also want to play some relationship building games and make sure everyone knows names.

Consider the personalities, abilities, ages, stages of development, and individual differences of young people in your project group. Some members may be active participants from the very beginning; others will wait to feel comfortable enough to talk aloud. Project members shouldn’t feel forced to converse, but should definitely be encouraged to engage and be involved, even if that means reserving the right to pass in the meantime. Growth can look very different for such a diverse group of youth. Leaving the door open for an ongoing conversation can allow for thriving discussions to evolve over time.

Be Safe, Feel Safe

Getting Started

Read this chapter for more information about safety factors and your role as the adult in creating safe meeting spaces.

At your first meeting of the year, introduce members to the *iThrive Member Guide*. We recommend that you read through pages 2–4. In addition, this first meeting will be the time to play a Name Game. An example is suggested in Chapter 1 on page 22 of *iChampion* and you can play any name game you know.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 1, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the *iexplore* and *ireflect* activities. The *iexplore* activities are described in detail in this chapter on pages 22–26. The *ireflect* activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

- Read the introduction on page 5 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Play another name game especially if the members of your project are new to each other.
- Complete Rights and Responsibilities as they are described.
- Complete the *ireflect* questions on page 7.
- Complete Safety Bingo as it is described. The Safety First Bingo card is in the back of *iThrive*. Be sure you know the correct answers to each of the descriptions in the squares.
- Complete the *ireflect* questions on page 8.
- Consider how you will do *istretch*—as a group or assign it as individual work before the next meeting?



Sensitive Issues

Within the 4-H community, youth often develop strong bonds with peers and adults while interacting with them. Sometimes, youth do not share sensitive information with everyone in their community like people at school, home, or a large group setting. However, creation of strong bonds within the 4-H community can help youth members feel comfortable sharing this information. Conversations between youth and adults about sensitive issues are crucial to foster a safe and welcoming environment that 4-H strives to provide all youth members. Here are some basic guidelines for understanding confidentiality of such conversations in your 4-H project, club, activity, or event:

Health and safety always come first. Did a 4-H member disclose something that leaves you questioning their health and safety? [Chapter 11, Section V. titled Training and Awareness of Child Abuse Reporting Procedures of the 4-H YDP Policy Handbook](#) provides key resources that can help 4-H adult volunteers determine if a 4-H member might be at risk of abuse or neglect; and what steps need to be taken if there is a concern regarding the welfare of a 4-H member. In addition, the manual provides resources that can help you and your fellow volunteers feel more prepared to handle these types of difficult situations before they evolve. This can be done by receiving training on safe spaces either through a community organization or online.

What if a 4-H member has made a disclosure that hints at child abuse or neglect? Below are three simple questions that you might want to consider asking the 4-H member privately in order to seek clarification or additional information regarding the disclosure.

- Are you going to hurt yourself?
- Are you going to hurt someone else?
- Is someone hurting you?

Although you are not expected to be a child abuse expert, asking simple questions like these can help you make better judgments about the safety of a 4-H member that might have disclosed sensitive information. If you are concerned about the safety of a 4-H member, **always** immediately consult your UCCE County 4-H office. Additionally, you can notify the appropriate authorities.

Don't do it alone. If you do not know how to handle a sensitive issue broached by a 4-H member, don't be discouraged. There is nothing wrong with referring the youth to another adult who you feel could provide better assistance or support on the topic disclosed.



Consider making a list of your allies and/or mentors within the 4-H program in advance. This will serve as a list of resources you can consult in order to ensure safety, support, and comfort of a youth member in the 4-H YDP.

Ask for clarification. This helps you better understand the needs of a 4-H member. Asking a simple question like “How can I help you?” can instigate a request from a youth member. This helps them feel comfortable sharing desires, needs, and hopes in relation to a sensitive topic.

Leave out judgments and opinions. This, perhaps, may be the first time a youth member tells an adult about an issue. Your response, or lack of one, will determine how and if the 4-H member continues to seek guidance and/or support. Although everyone is entitled to an opinion, be sensitive to the needs of the youth member. At times, voicing out your own opinion or judgment can conflict with that of a youth member.

4-H YDP volunteers play a crucial role in helping youth develop a strong sense of character which stems from their own moral understanding of good and bad. In order to model a mutual relationship of trust and respect, you can help a youth member self-reflect on sensitive issues by allowing them to explore thoughts, feelings, and incidents in their lives.



Background and Key Concepts

Emotional Safety

Emotional safety has to do with a sense of well-being. When you feel relaxed—this is emotional safety. When you feel welcome in a group or when you feel a sense of trust—this is emotional safety.

As the adult in this partnership, you have many opportunities to increase feelings of emotional safety in your leadership project. You can do this by following the steps below:

Advocate for all members in your project. When you see or hear put-downs, negative comments, or other actions that diminish self or others, consistently speak up. In a calm and matter-of-fact voice, let your project members know that this behavior is not optimal and doesn't help us thrive.

Maintain self-control in yourself and your members. One of the things kids fear the most is being out of control....and they don't have very good brakes! The brain has not fully developed the ability to act with sound judgment and emotional control until age 25. Before things get out of hand, step in and calm things down.

Other simple tips:

- Greet all youth upon arrival.
- Ensure that everyone knows each other's names.
- Create a space where everyone can contribute.
- Turn around the first time a member calls your name.

Physical Safety

We feel physically safe when we know that steps are being taken to ensure our safety. The 4-H Safety Manual is the publication that gives activity guidelines for physical safety during 4-H activities.

One of the ways that we can help create physical safety is by talking about it. Some topics to discuss include: locations of emergency exits, what to do in an emergency, who is in charge, where the fire extinguisher is located, etc. Also engage young people and provide an opportunity for them to share in the decision-making and planning around the physical space. Ask them to identify all the ways that they can see that this is a safe meeting space. You may have to ask processing questions such as, "If we had a small fire, what and where is a piece of equipment that could help us put it out?" Then ask them if they have ideas on how to make the meeting space safer.



Young people who are engaged in conversations about safety report higher levels of feeling safe than their peers who do not have these conversations. For them, just knowing you thought about these issues increases their feelings of safety!

4-H YDP volunteers play a crucial role in helping youth develop a strong sense of character which stems from their own moral understanding of good and bad. In order to model a mutual relationship of trust and respect, you can help a youth member self-reflect on sensitive issues by allowing them to explore thoughts, feelings, and incidents in their lives.



Objective:

To know everyone's name and one piece of information about them.

Time:

15 minutes for a group of about 10 people

Materials:

None

Facilitator Tips:

Maintain a fun atmosphere. It is okay if someone doesn't remember a name or what they like about 4-H. If someone forgets, they can just ask for a reminder.

The Name Game

(page 6 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Instruct the group, both youth and adults, to sit in a circle. Explain that for this activity, good listening skills are very important. When someone is talking, look them in the eye, don't interrupt, and nod your head or smile to show support and understanding.
2. Ask for a volunteer to start the game and move clockwise around the circle, one person at a time. Each person will say their name and add a statement about what they like about 4-H. Here's the challenge—it **must** begin with the first letter of their name. If youth are new to 4-H, they can share why they joined. Each response must begin with the same letter as their first name. Example: "My name is Sally and what I like about 4-H is showmanship."
3. The next person in the circle will repeat Sally's introduction before sharing. For example, "This is Sally and she likes showmanship. My name is Rob and what I like about 4-H is rocketry."
4. Continue to move around the circle, making the challenge more difficult with each new introduction. For example, "That is Sally and she likes showmanship. This is Rob and he likes rocketry. My name is Tamesha and what I like about 4-H is traveling." By the time you reach the last person, they will introduce everyone in the circle. If you forget a name or what they like, just look at that person and ask them to remind you.



Objective:

When we form agreements together about our individual rights and responsibilities to each other, our feelings of safety increase. We know how to behave in this group and what to expect from others.

Time:

1 hour for a group of about 10 people

Materials:

10 pieces of big chart paper, one piece of poster board, colorful construction paper in a variety of colors, pencils, scissors, and random art supplies: markers, glitter, stickers, glue, etc.

Facilitator Tips:

During the brainstorm process all ideas are acceptable. No judgment or comments should eliminate a comment from anyone during this phase. A "right" is something that you are entitled to as a 4-H member and a member of this group. A "responsibility" is an action you must take to maintain your rights and the rights of others in your project.

Rights and Responsibilities

(page 6 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Ask someone to be a recorder.
2. On one sheet of paper write "RIGHTS". Instruct the group to brainstorm a list of rights that the group is entitled to. Allow five minutes to get a list. The recorder writes down what everyone says and may also contribute ideas as well.
3. Look at the list and see if there are duplicate ideas. Group similar ideas together to make one statement. Can you agree to the list of rights? If not, now is the time to discuss and evaluate each idea.
4. Keep the ideas that everyone can agree on and either cross out ones that you decide as a group to eliminate or work as a group to rephrase them so everyone can agree.
5. Do the same exercise for "RESPONSIBILITIES". Brainstorm first, then discuss, evaluate, and either eliminate or reword if needed. Make sure everyone agrees with the list of responsibilities.
6. Put the lists aside for now.
7. Let's be crafty! Have everyone take a sheet of construction paper of their color choice. Instruct each member to trace their hand and cut it out. Ask each member to write their name on the cut-out. Using the random craft supplies, members decorate their hand to represent who they are....



8. Ask for a volunteer to transcribe the list of RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES to the poster board. Put "RIGHTS" in one column and "RESPONSIBILITIES" in the other. Save space around the edge of the poster board for their hands.
9. When members are ready to agree to RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES, they glue their hand to the poster board as their "signature" and agreement to embrace these rights and responsibilities.
10. Talk about how you are going to support each other to remember the rights and responsibilities.
11. Use the completed RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES at the beginning of each meeting to check in with members of the project group. How does everyone think we're doing on our agreements with each other? How can we support each other if we are struggling in any area? Are there either rights or responsibilities that we should add to the lists?



4-H Safety First Bingo (page 8 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Each member uses the Bingo Card in their *iThrive* or a copy. Everyone needs a pen or pencil.
2. Instruct players that this is a game of 'black out' bingo and each square must be filled in before the winner can call out "Bingo!"
3. Explain that participants have 10 minutes to move around the room and find people who know the answer or can show you the item on the Bingo Card.
4. When someone can complete one of your squares, they should initial your card in that square.
5. You should also be initialing others' cards when you can.
6. Stop the game when someone calls "Bingo!" or after 10 minutes.
7. Have everyone gather in a circle. Review each square and ask for volunteers to give answers. Give correct information when necessary.
8. Debrief by asking these questions:
 - Why is it important to know about these safety features?
 - What other safety features do you notice in this meeting place that we haven't mentioned?
 - Why is this information important to know in your role as a Junior or Teen Leader?

Objective:

Increase feelings of physical safety for members by helping them understand safety features of the meeting space.

Time:

20 minutes

Materials:

4-H Safety First Bingo Card (found in back of *iThrive*), pencils or pens

Facilitator Tips:

Be sure that you know the answers to all squares. Based on the size of your group, determine the maximum number of times any one person can sign the card.



4-H "Safety First" Bingo

I can locate a fire extinguisher

I can show where two exits out of this building are

I know where to go in an earthquake

I know the first and last names of the adults who are responsible for this group

I know the name or the address of our location

If the power goes out, I can tell you what to do

I know what to do if I get separated from the group while on a field trip to a public place

I know what to do if something we are cooking catches on fire

I know what to do if I get bitten by an animal

I know what to do if I get hurt at a 4-H meeting or event

I can tell you two knife safety rules

In any emergency, I should do my best to remain _____
(I know the best 4 letter word)

I can tell you two things we should bring to an all-day, summer, outdoor event

In 4-H, if we don't know the safety rules for an activity, I know we can find out by looking at (name of the publication)

I know where the first aid kit is

I know where to get water at this meeting space

**SAFETY
FIRST**

Chapter 2

What's the Point?

The second chapter in *iThrive* is about building relationships. One of the greatest emotional needs of humans is a sense of belonging. At no other time in our lives is this more evident than during the teen years. The stronger the relationships that we have with others, the more support we have to help us thrive.

Project Leader Tips...

When you process activities listen carefully to the conversation between young people. Encourage comments that are positive and esteem building and discourage comments that are negative or discouraging. This relates back to creating safety, and is also a great strategy for helping your members move from acquaintanceship to true friendship.

Got Connections?

Getting Started

Read this chapter for more information about building relationships and your role as the adult in creating strong connections in your project group.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 2, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the *iexplore* and *ireflect* activities. The *iexplore* activities are described in detail in this chapter on page 30. The *ireflect* activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

- Read the introduction on page 9 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Complete the Magic Carpet Ride as it is described on page 30 of *iChampion*.
- Complete the *ireflect* Statements of Appreciation on page 11 together.
- If you are going to do the *istretch* field trip, research local ropes course options and plan a field trip.



Background and Key Concepts

After you have spent one or two meetings on creating safety within the project group, the next step is to focus on strengthening the relationships that are starting to emerge, or already exist, or may be brand new. One of the ways that we build relationships in 4-H is through youth-adult partnerships.

Youth-adult partnerships are shown to be one of the most effective ways to engage both youth and adults in meaningful activities which contribute to positive youth development. Youth involved in positive, meaningful, respectful relationships with adults have been shown to improve skills and competencies while decreasing participation in risky behaviors. When partnering with youth, adults also build skills and simultaneously strengthen the organizations they belong to.

Youth-adult partnerships take place when youth and adults plan, learn, and work together, with both groups sharing equally in the decision-making process. This dynamic is very different than many relationships in which adults take the leadership roles and youth are assigned inferior roles, or programs where youth make all the decisions while the adults sit back and watch. Instead, youth-adult partnerships build on the strengths of each group and the final program or activity is stronger than a program or activity devised and delivered individually by either youth or adults alone.

Youth-adult partnerships are sometimes slow to take root as both youth and adults often have misperceptions of the other group. Adults may see youth as undependable or too inexperienced, whereas youth often see adults as too bossy or too busy.

Research indicates that successful youth-adult partnerships require a variety of elements, including:

- Youth and adults share equally in the decision-making process.
- Together, youth and adults achieve better results than either would if working alone.
- Roles for youth and adults are authentic and meaningful.
- Youth and adults learn together and serve as resources for one another.
- Each group is treated with respect and dignity by the other group.



This same research cites a wide range of strategies that can be used to support these basic elements. Some of these include:

- Adults and youth work together to determine roles, plan activities, set deadlines, create guidelines, and divide tasks.
- If voting is used for decision-making, youth and adults' votes count equally.
- Everyone feels comfortable enough to ask questions and express their ideas.
- Meetings are held when youth are out of school and meetings start and end on time.
- Adults offer to transport youth to meetings.
- Both youth and adults are encouraged to contribute their unique strengths to the partnership.

Although not always easy or initially comfortable, employing youth-adult partnership strategies is an effective means of strengthening existing programs and increasing positive youth development outcomes.

Murdock, S. (2002) Youth-adult partnerships: www.ucanr.org/sites/UC4-H/About/Mission/YAP/



Objective:

Work together to solve a problem and begin to build or strengthen relationships with members of the group.

Time:

20 minutes

Materials:

A plastic tarp, 5 ft. x 7 ft. will work for group size up to 10. If you have more participants, use multiple tarps and have a bunch of magic carpets in the air!

Facilitator Tips:

Keep the story line going; use "flying, landing" terminology. If someone steps off the carpet and essentially falls to the ground, have the group 'land' the carpet and pick up their team member—they should check to make sure they are okay (mostly people get embarrassed because they simply stepped off the carpet). They should start over from that point.

Be mindful of safety! Everyone should keep in contact with the carpet at all times (no one is allowed to climb upon others).

Cain, James, (n.d.). Magic Carpets. In *Teamwork and Teamplay*. Retrieved from www.teamworkandteamplay.com/resources/tt_magiccarpet.pdf
For more team and community building activities visit www.teamworkandteamplay.com

Magic Carpet Ride

(page 10 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Place the magic carpet on the floor.
2. Invite everyone to board the magic carpet by standing on it.
3. Say:
"Your group is on a magic carpet ride, high above the surrounding countryside. You suddenly realize that you are going the wrong direction because the carpet you are riding on is upside down! (Don't ask me how that works, only the magic carpet knows!) Since you are high above the ground, you must turn the carpet over without stepping off of the carpet.

Each person must stay in contact with the carpet at all times. No other body parts can touch the surrounding air space. If someone falls off, you must land the carpet, collect your carpet mate and start over."

4. When the group has successfully flipped the magic carpet over and are now going in the right direction, discuss the following questions.

What Happened?

What role did you play in solving the problem?
Did one or a few people do most of the work?
Why do you think that is?

So What?

What did you learn about yourself during this activity? Why might that be important for you and your team to know?

Now What?

Next time you are presented with a challenging activity in this group, is there something you would do differently? Would you take on a different role? Would you respond or react to someone else differently? How could you get everyone involved?



Chapter 3

What's the Point?

The third chapter in *iThrive* is where we really start to help youth members build skills on their path toward thriving. Your role as a Spark Champion is vital to helping youth members identify, name, and nurture their sparks. Young people who can identify at least one spark are more likely to grow or increase their indicators of thriving.

Project Leader Tips...

It's important that you continuously create an environment of trust and safety. We started this Leadership Project with safety and relationship building so that you can move on to the more important conversations with the young people in the project. The truth is most groups need to re-establish trust and safety regularly. Make sure that you allow time in your meetings for activities that build relationships between all of the members—youth and adults.

In the project setting, project leaders are Spark Champions, that is, the adults that champion the development of sparks in young people—in part, this is where the name of this guide came from! Your role as a Spark Champion continues throughout the Leadership Project.

Light Your Spark

Definition

A spark is something you're passionate about; it really fires you up and gives you joy and energy. A spark comes from deep in your gut, and it is an important part of who you are. A spark may be an interest, skill, or talent.

Through meaningful conversations, adults encourage young people to identify their spark by elevating the conversation from "what I'm going to do" (project) to "who I am". Sparks are what help youth see and act on how they can make a difference in the world.

Getting Started

Read this chapter for more information about sparks and your role as a Spark Champion.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 3, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the *iexplore* and *ireflect* activities. The *iexplore* activities are described in detail in this chapter on page 34. The *ireflect* activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

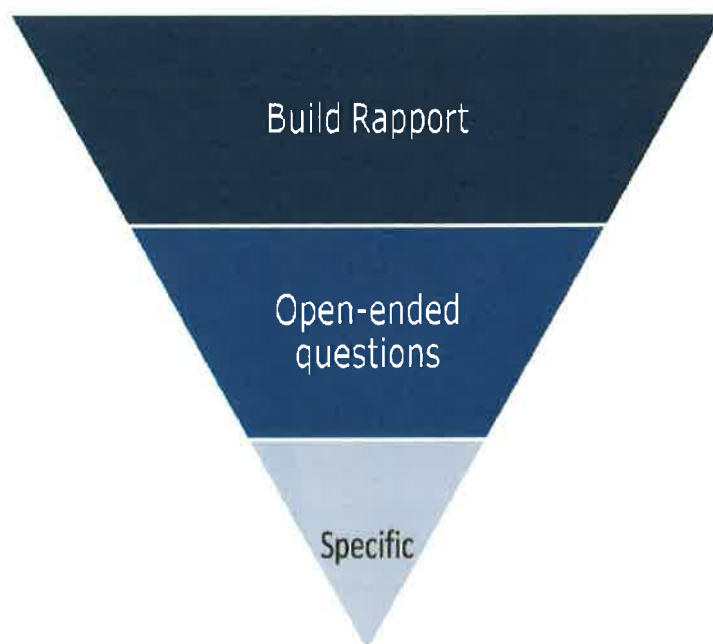
- Read the introduction on page 12 of *iThrive* together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Complete the Personal Spark Shield as it is described. Listen carefully to participants as they draw and share their ideas so that you have some information about how to help your members identify or nurture their sparks.
- Complete the *ireflect* activity on pages 13 and 14.
- Consider how you will do *istretch*—as a group or as individual work before the next meeting?



Background and Key Concepts

- ① Thirty-eight percent of young people across the United States between the ages of 11 and 17 don't know what their spark is, even though 100 percent of teens surveyed understood and wanted to have a spark, according to a 2007 survey done by the Search Institute.
- ① Youth-adult partnerships in 4-H intentionally provide young people with a connection to a caring adult that can help them discover and nurture their skills, passions, and interests in a safe environment.
- ① Peter Benson's research at the Search Institute has identified the following as just some of the ways that adults can help young people understand what motivates them:
 - Ask questions, listen, and provide encouragement
 - Point out observed moments where youth show joy and energy
 - Assist youth in finding ways to express their sparks
 - Sparks can be derived from 4-H projects in multiple ways. Examples can include entrepreneurship, leading, learning, teaching and instructing, relationships, helping and serving, and family connection.

Promising research published by Peter Benson of the Search Institute of Minnesota suggests that adults could be more actively, intentionally engaged in helping young people find their spark, or the inner passions and interests that motivate and inspire youth towards the path to thriving. Starting a conversation on finding one's inner passions and interests is just that—a two-way dialogue. Consider infusing individual as well as group discussions into project meetings and events that have potential to help participants reflect on their sparks. Here are some basic guidelines for starting this conversation in your project.



Build Rapport by embracing the youth-adult partnership model, creating safety, and building relationships with all members of your project.

Ask open-ended questions about their passions, interests, or skills. Check out the Sparks Conversation Starters in the Appendix to get more detailed information on how to start sparks conversations as a part of the normal day. Sparks Conversation Starters were written for parents by the Search Institute. The information applies to project leaders as well.

Get Specific by listening closely to member answers to the Personal Spark Shield activity. Suggest ideas that may not have occurred to the young person or encourage other members to help each other identify a spark.

Remember, a spark is more than something that makes us happy! It really defines who we are in the world and can be used to make a positive difference in the world.

Try to identify early indicators of something in your project that might be a spark for individual members. Start off sparks conversations with phrases like:

- “You could be really good at this...”
- “This looks like it makes you happy...”
- “It seems like this is something that really excites you...”

Ask the right probing questions regarding inner passions and interests to help clarify exactly why a young person is drawn to a particular activity. For instance, an animal science project might appeal to a member’s interest in entrepreneurship, a rocketry project might reveal a spark for problem solving, and a sewing project might be more interesting to a member for the opportunity it provides to teach. In these examples entrepreneurship, problem solving, and teaching are the sparks.

Consider ways to build concrete, intentional steps for members to engage with their sparks more actively. Could a member that likes to teach be given the opportunity to lead a project meeting or activity? Could a youth that has a spark for writing be engaged in spearheading the development of marketing materials for the project group? Also, think about posing the following types of follow-up questions directly to 4-H members:

- “How can we, as a group, help you do more of what excites you?”
- “What part of this project is most fun for you?”
- “What else makes you feel like this?”

These are just some of the sparks identified by the Search Institute. For more information on sparks, go to www.search-institute.org/sparks.



Personal Spark Shield

(page 13 in *iThrive*)

Objective:

To help members think about a few things that are important to them and that may lead them to discover a spark. To help Project Leaders listen closely to members' responses to things of interest to them so that the Project Leader can nurture sparks.

Time:

30 minutes

Materials:

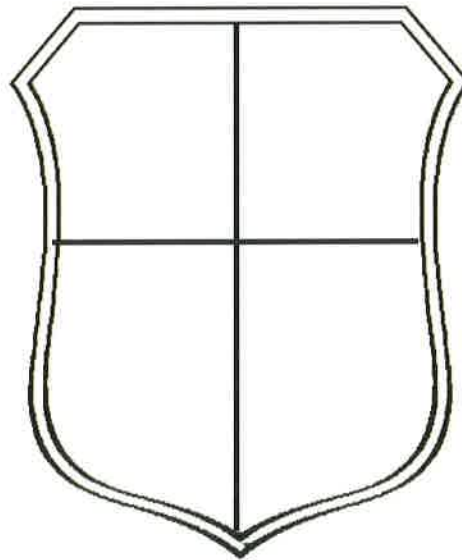
One big piece of paper per person: flip chart or poster size works great. Markers, crayons, or coloring pencils.

Facilitator Tips:

Everyone works individually but allow unstructured talking and sharing of ideas during this time—you might learn something interesting! Allow 5-8 minutes between each question to give members time to think and draw.

Directions:

1. Draw the outline of a shield on the outer edges of your paper. Here is an example of a shield or crest. You can use your creativity to design the shape of your shield. Divide your shield into four separate spaces.



2. In each of the four spaces you will be answering a different question. Represent the answer by drawing pictures or symbols of your ideas. If you can't think of a picture or symbol to represent your idea writing words is okay, but do this sparingly.
3. Ask one question at a time and allow at least 5-8 minutes between questions to allow time for members to think about and draw their responses. Allow more time if you think the group needs it.
 - Upper Left: What are things that you enjoy doing?
 - Upper Right: Who are the people that matter to you?
 - Lower Left: What are the activities that matter to you?
 - Lower Right: What are the issues or causes that matter to you?
4. Have participants share their shields.



Chapter 4

What's the Point?

The fourth chapter in *iThrive* helps us understand a little bit about how our brains learn and grow. At any time we can choose to make our brains smarter. Young people need support and encouragement to practice a growth mindset.

Project Leader Tip...

There are two iexplore, two ireflect, and two istretch activities in this chapter. You may want to do this chapter over two meetings, as suggested in the Sample Meeting Year Calendar on page 8. Suggested meeting lesson plans are in the *iThrive* Chapter Checklist.

Flex Your Brain

Definition

People with a growth mindset see skills and abilities as things that can be improved through practice, effort, and persistence. Research shows us that people who have a growth mindset are better able to handle tasks and challenges and are more successful.

Getting Started

Read and understand the background information in this chapter about growth mindset. Your role as an adult volunteer is to nurture and support effort and persistence toward success.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 4, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the iexplore and ireflect activities. The iexplore activities are described in detail in this chapter on pages 42–45. The ireflect activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

Meeting A

- Read the introduction on pages 15 and 16 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Together, read aloud “An Experiment in Growing Connections” on pages 16 and 17.
- Complete the ireflect activity on page 20.
- Together, view the istretch YouTube video “Adolescent Brain”.



Meeting B

- Complete Traffic Jam as it is described.
- Complete the ireflect activity on page 21.
- Together, view the istretch YouTube video "The Effect of Praise on Mindset".

OR

Meeting A

- Read the introduction on pages 15 and 16 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Together, read aloud "An Experiment in Growing Connections".
- Complete Traffic Jam as it is described.
- Complete both ireflect activities individually between meetings.

Meeting B

- Discuss ireflect activities done on their own.
- Together, view both istretch videos and answer the discussion questions for each.



Background and Key Concepts

The 4-H program model strives to partner with youth to develop a mindset of success that is defined by the ability to rise to the challenges of life. Adults are central to the process of helping youth to recognize the opportunities within 4-H will help them learn and grow. We know that most things take a lot of practice and learning from mistakes to master. In 4-H, youth experience safe spaces and places to make mistakes and attain mastery.

- Young people's potential for success is influenced by how youth view their skills and intelligence, according to the research of Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck. In the 4-H community, adults have the chance to introduce youth to a growth or learning-oriented mindset that teaches youth the value of practice and effort.
- Youth that can view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow are more likely to thrive. When young people possess a growth mindset they are: more resilient, better able to adapt to challenging situations, and tend to get better grades in school.
- Adults should have comfort in the knowledge that people are not simply born with talent, but that truly great skill and ability can be cultivated in youth.
- Adults can intentionally weave a growth mindset into program delivery by:
 - Placing more emphasis on learning versus winning
 - Discouraging the use of labels among youth that suggest fixed abilities or intelligence like "smart" and "dumb"
 - Praising effort and practice invested by youth in building skills
 - Recognizing young people for persistence in the face of adversity
 - Focus language and learning on growth mindset examples.

In 4-H, Project Leaders strive to support youth to develop a mindset of success in the project setting. Carol Dweck of Stanford University has spent decades researching the mindset of success, and her findings can provide significant insight into how 4-H project leaders impact the mindset development of young people. According to her research, people tend to think of themselves, and others, in terms of one of two types of mindsets:

- People with a Growth mindset see skills and abilities as things that can be improved through practice and effort; and
- People with a Fixed mindset believe talent and intellect are "fixed" qualities that are set in stone.

However, research has also shown that youth and adults can shift between the two different types of mindsets. Thus, as an adult leader, you can shift yourself towards more of a growth mindset and help youth shift to more of a growth mindset. One way to help yourself and youth understand that skills and abilities can be improved through practice and effort is to understand that brains are continuing to make connections and grow across the lifespan. In one science experiment, rats were placed into two different cage environments: one where they were basically couch potatoes and another where they had access to toys, puzzles, and games. The rats with the games and toys had heavier brains, developed more connections between their brain cells, and were smarter than the couch potato rats. Even older rats placed in the cage with puzzles and games became smarter through learning and interacting with the enriched environment.



Dweck's research and the results of an experiment with rats (see *iThrive*, pages 16-17) offer evidence that strengthens the conclusion that the project setting can indeed help guide 4-H members towards a trajectory of thriving. That is, the 4-H project setting is a stimulating environment in which new things are continually being learned and there are opportunities to try new things and practice old things, all of which will help youth grow new connections and get smarter. Important points to remember and help youth understand are:

- All youth have the capacity to increase their skills, abilities, and intellect through engaging in challenging tasks.
- Developing a mindset of success, or a growth mindset, requires practice and effort.

Start by asking the following questions:

- How can I nurture a growth mindset in myself?
- What can I do to make project meetings more challenging, interesting, engaging, and interactive?
- How can 4-H members be challenged to learn and grow through the project?

What can a project leader do to weave promotion of a growth mindset into the project setting? Here are some ideas, but keep in mind that these are just starting points. Project leaders should be creative and stretch themselves to create new approaches to nurturing a mindset of success:

- Model the behavior by personally adopting a growth mindset.
- Set early group expectations that focus on valuing effort.
- Discourage the use of labels that suggest fixed ability like "the smart one".
- Empower 4-H members to challenge themselves for the sake of learning and growth, while helping minimize the significance of failure.
- Encourage young people to step up into new roles. For example, when dividing tasks do not always default to the youth who is good and comfortable with numbers to be in charge of the budget. Encourage youth to try new roles and tasks; they might discover a new spark they did not know they had, and they'll grow new connections and get smarter, even if they make mistakes.
- Introduce opportunities for members to light their sparks, flex their brains, and learn through practice and effort.



Learning, Effort, and The Environment

What makes the brain learn and develop?

The brain is like a muscle; it grows stronger and denser when you exercise it, like when you explore new information, practice skills, and learn new concepts. It also gets stronger when you challenge it with harder tasks instead of easy, “light-weight” tasks.

Effort and Learning: You learn most when you are actively seeking new information, and when you are active in using and practicing it!

Effort: You learn most when you are making an active effort: seeking new information, using, and practicing it. Studies with both people and animals show that when you practice a skill in an active way your brain develops more new connections and even grows more new cells!

Environment and Learning: You learn most when you are in a challenging environment where there are lots of things to explore and learn. Your brain doesn't grow stronger from doing the same easy tasks over and over—it needs new, harder challenges to make it grow stronger.

What makes you smart?

Intelligence is the ability to think, and especially the ability to take new information and use it in creative ways. It depends on the network of nerve cells in your brain. Intelligence can include many, many different skills: using language, solving math problems, understanding other people's behavior, figuring out how objects move in space, and many more. But they all have one thing in common: they depend on the neurons in your brain passing messages around through the network of connections between them.

The more you learn, the smarter you become!

When you learn new things, you are making new connections in your brain. Extra connections in your brain make it easier to create thoughts and take in and process more information, so you will actually notice yourself feeling smarter. In fact, the brain areas you are using actually grow bigger as your knowledge increases, and you will find things becoming easier.

What's the best way to exercise your brain and make it smarter?

When you don't know very much about a subject, it can make you feel “dumb.” Then you may feel like giving up. But this is only because you haven't built up the networks of connections in that area of your brain. If you work out your brain it will get stronger, just like your muscles do when you exercise them.



What can you do?

To exercise your brain, **GET ACTIVE!** Take charge, explore, and seek out information. Write an outline of main ideas. Try to explain the information to someone else. Create and solve problems for yourself.

USE REPETITION to give your neurons a workout!

Just like when you exercise, it's repeating an action that really builds strength. By repeating information or a skill, you will strengthen the connections in that area of your brain. Read, write, say, or do anything important 5-10 times instead of once.

When something is hard, TRY HARDER!

That's when you need to put in more effort to wire the new connections into your brain. So **DON'T GIVE UP!**



Wise Praise

Use wise praise to help young people who have seemingly failed a task. Through the use of wise praise we can point out the high standards we have for achievement and at the same time give youth the kind of support that results in feeling encouraged instead of discouraged. For example, if a member is working hard toward reaching their Gold Star and is missing significant activities in their record book, you would say, "In order to meet the high standards required to receive a Gold Star, you will need to make citizenship or community service a priority in your 4-H work this year. I wouldn't be telling you this if I didn't think you could meet them." Or you could simply say, "I know you can meet the high standards to achieve a Gold Star."

Using this technique, you communicate that you know this work is hard and that you also know that the young person can meet the challenges presented to them.

Phrases and Ideas to Support a Growth Mindset

"That's being a good learner!"

"Great job! I can see that you really worked hard on that."

"Wow! You picked the hardest one!" That was a big challenge; I'll bet you learned a lot!"

"Oops, I made a mistake—let's celebrate! Making mistakes helps me learn."

"Awesome effort! Keep going!"

"That was challenging and just by trying, your brain grew! How cool is that?"

"I know you're disappointed that didn't work. Keep trying, your effort will pay off."

"Based on what you learned, what will you do next time to help you succeed?"

"How can you use what you learned when you (describe a previous similar situation) to overcome the challenge you're having now?"

"What is going to help you learn the most?"

"What have you achieved so far?"

"You're learning!"

In response to "I can't!" Say, "What would it look like if you tried?"

In response to "This is too hard!" Say, "It is hard and it's okay to make mistakes. What have you learned by making mistakes so far?"



Objective:

To learn and label that the brain is like a muscle and to develop a “growth mindset”—use this information when faced with tasks and challenges.

Time:

15 minutes

Materials:

Rats experiment story

An Experiment in Growing Connections

(pages 16 & 17 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Read the following story aloud. You can take turns having different people read, or just one or two people can read the whole story.

“Researchers took identical rats and put them in two different environments. One was a bare cage with only food and water. The other was filled with toys, puzzles, and games to explore...kind of a summer camp for rats!

The rats in the bare cage just lay around doing nothing. The summer camp rats were busy running around exploring and learning. When they measured the rats’ brains, it turned out that the summer camp rats, who were busy learning, had brains that were up to 10% heavier than the cage potato rats.

They looked at the rats’ brains closely and it turned out they had many more connections between their brain cells—that’s why their brains weighed more. And that’s not all! When they took these rats out of their cages and gave them rat intelligence tests, there was a BIG difference between them. The summer camp rats were a lot smarter.

Remember, these rats were identical before they were put in different environments. They had the same genes, just like they were twins. What made a difference was the fact that the summer camp rats were in an enriched environment where they got lots of mental exercise.

Does this mean that the cage potato rats were doomed to be stupid for the rest of their lives? Not at all! This experiment was done with lots of rats, some of them old in rat years...even the old geezer rats gained brain weight and got smarter when they were given mental exercise.



So, does this happen in people?

A team of leading brain researchers took a group of young guerrilla warriors who were completely isolated. They had no books, no education, and didn't know how to read or write. The researchers worked with these young people and taught them how to read. A couple of years after the classes, they measured their brains and just like the rats, their brains grew compared to other young people who were not taught how to read. This shows that whenever you try something hard, as long as you give it your best effort, you're actually making your brain grow and get smarter.

Understanding that the brain is like a muscle and using this information when faced with tasks and challenges is called having a "growth mindset." Research shows us that people who have a growth mindset are better able to handle tasks and challenges and are more successful. They understand that when something is difficult or you feel "dumb" it is only because you haven't built up the networks of connections in that area of your brain. If you work out your brain it will get stronger, just like your muscles do when you exercise them.

2. Ask the following questions, one at a time and have some discussion about each.
 - What does this research tell you about YOUR brain?
 - How are you going to use this knowledge to grow YOUR brain?

Rat Experiment Story:
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Objective:

Traffic Jam is designed to help participants focus attention on applying a growth mindset to challenging situations. In its basic design, the activity is a math problem which presents some challenges to each team. Through the facilitation process, participants will increase their knowledge of the concepts of a growth mindset.

Time:

30 minutes or more

Materials:

Gym spots or other spot markers on the floor (foam, non-adhesive shelf liner, cut into 12" x 12" squares work great)

Preparation:

Collect gym spot markers ahead of time or cut spot markers

Safety Note:

Pieces of paper on the floor are a slip hazard. While paper is readily available, it is not a safe spot marker!

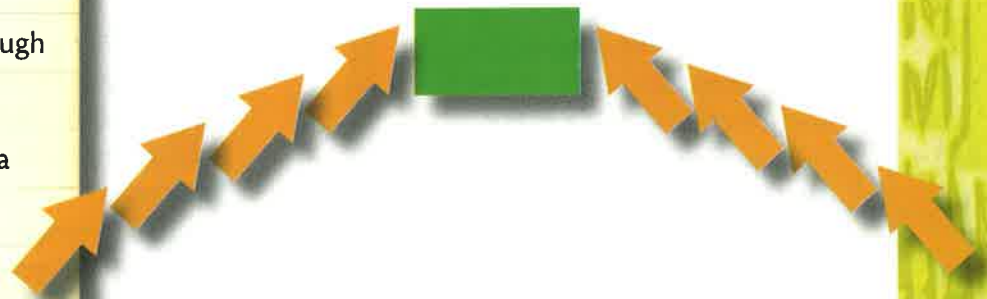
Facilitator Tips:

Arrange spot markers in a U-shape, as diagramed, so that team members can see each other to maximize participation. **Do not** modify the set up or instructions of this activity in any way.

Traffic Jam

(pages 18 & 19 in *iThrive*)

Directions:



1. Break up into teams of 6-8 people—everyone in the group is a team. If you have an odd number of people, you can use an object to stand in for a person. Some one will need to move the object when it has a turn.
2. Give each team member a place marker, plus one extra per team. Arrange the place markers on the floor in a slight u-shape.
3. Instruct team members to line up on either side of the middle place marker and face the middle (in the diagram above, start out with one person in each space marked with an arrow, facing that direction).
4. Tell your teams that the object of the game is to legally move players on the left side to the right; and players on the right side to the left. A player can only move to an unoccupied space in front of them.
 - a. You may move past a player facing the opposite direction to get to the empty space behind him/her.
 - b. You may not move past more than 1 player (remember, you must be facing the opposite direction).
 - c. You may not move backwards nor turn around.
 - d. You may not move around anyone facing the same direction.
 - e. Only one person can move at a time.



Facilitator Tips *Continued...*

Traffic Jam is a solvable problem. What happens during this activity is much more important than the solution—it is for this reason that we have not shared the solution to the problem. It is not necessary or even desirable to know the solution to the puzzle. In fact, there is great learning in the discovery of the solution even if that happens at a later time.

Ready? Go!

5. Allow about 12 minutes to solve the puzzle and then stop action.
6. Bring the whole group back together to debrief and apply what was learned. Ask:

What Happened?

How did you decide what strategies to use? What kinds of messages were you saying either out loud or to yourself about this activity?

So What?

Which statements were more “growth mindset” oriented? Did you find yourself responding more in one way over another? As the activity progressed, did it become easier or more difficult? Why do you think that is? At each new attempt did you move more quickly or slowly? Why do you think that is?

Now What?

What would you do or say to another person to help nurture a growth mindset? How would you support the efforts of others to help them make stronger brain connections?

Wrap Up Statement:

Research shows that people with a growth mindset don't have to be perfect! It's about learning something over time—confronting a challenge and making progress. People with a growth mindset thrive when they stretch themselves.

Rohnke, Karl. (1989). Cowstails and cobras II. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.



Chapter 5

What's the Point?

The fifth chapter in *iThrive* is about learning how to use an easily remembered system for managing goals. It is easier to get somewhere when you know where you are going, how you are going to get there, and what you are going to do when things get in your way.

Project Leader Tips...

Use all the skills that you learned about supporting a growth mindset when supporting youth through the GPS process. Remember 4-H Thrive is a full process in which each component works together to help youth thrive. Help youth cement the links by discussing how GPS can be used to help discover or grow their spark, and how important a growth mindset will be in reaching their goals.

There are three explore, three reflect, and two stretch activities in this chapter. You may want to do this chapter over two meetings, as suggested in the Sample Meeting Year Calendar on page 8. Suggested meeting lesson plans are in the *iThrive* Chapter Checklist.

Before beginning this Chapter, complete all of the following:

1. Participate in a Rubrics Calibration Training (see more details on page 50).
2. Select at least three members whom you will mentor and complete Spark Champion Questions in the 4-H Online Record Book for the whole year.
3. Complete the baseline GPS Rubric and the C Rubric for each of the three or more members you have chosen to mentor for the year.

Goal Management

Definition

Goal management is defined by the ability to effectively utilize goal setting skills to manage the process of reaching a goal or goals. In the 4-H Thrive model, we are using the GPS system of goal management:

Goal Selection – Figure out what you want to do.

Pursuit of Strategies – Make your plan with details: By when? How? Where?

Shifting Gears – Decide on other options if obstacles get in your way.

Getting Started

Read and understand key concepts in this chapter for more information about the GPS system of goal management. Your role as an adult volunteer is to nurture and support effort and persistence in goal selection, pursuit of strategies, and shifting gears when things get in the way.

● **Goal Selection:** Help guide youth members through the GPS goal setting process as described in *iThrive*. If youth have not yet identified a spark, encourage them to set a goal around discovering one spark this year. If youth have identified a spark, encourage them to set a goal around growing their spark.

● **Pursuit of Strategies:** Help members identify three or four action steps that they can take to move them toward their destination (goal). These steps should be challenging and show that they are using a growth mindset. Strategies should be specific about when, where, and how each step will be taken.



- **Shifting Gears:** Help members identify what factors may interfere with them achieving their goals, especially things outside of their control—not just because they gave up. Also encourage them to think about who they can ask for help along the way.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 5, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the iexplore and ireflect activities. The iexplore activities are described in detail in this chapter on pages 51–55. The reflect activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

Meeting A

- Read Reach Your Goals on page 23 together. Make sure members understand the concepts.
- Complete the iexplore for Goal Selection (G) on page 24.
- Complete the ireflect for Goal Selection (G) on page 24.
- Members record a selected goal on page 31.
- Read about Pursue Strategies (P) on page 25 together.
- Complete Cup Towers as it is described.
- Complete the ireflect activity for Pursue Strategies on page 27.
- Members record their strategies for reaching their goal on page 31.
- Complete the istretch on page 27 individually between meetings.

Meeting B

- Read about Shifting Gears on page 28 together.
- Complete Paper Towers as it is described.
- Complete the ireflect activity on page 29.
- Members record obstacles that may get in the way of achieving their goal on page 31.
- Complete the istretch on page 30 individually between meetings OR have an extended meeting/sleepover and watch the movie together. Process the reflection questions after watching the movie.



Background and Key Concepts

Goal setting is embedded within the 4-H YDP delivery model. In the 4-H community, youth members partner with adults to plan, organize, and coordinate activities and events that serve as experiential opportunities to build goal management skills. Growth gained through goal management skills is part of a larger effort to ensure that youth intentionally move toward a trajectory of thriving.

In order to succeed in any future endeavor, youth need to set goals, create a plan, and adjust to meet challenges of life. The Thrive Foundation for Youth of Menlo Park partnered with Richard Lerner of Tufts University Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development to create the GPS model for goal setting in youth. The term “GPS” is an acronym for Goal selection, Pursuit of strategies, and Shifting gears. Research indicates that this three-step process is effective in helping young people learn goal management skills. Importantly, goal management skills lead to increases in positive youth development, such as the 6 Cs, which are correlated with reduced risky behaviors (e.g., substance use). Thus, goal management skills intentionally help youth move toward a trajectory of thriving.

Youth-adult partnerships in the 4-H program are the ideal model for youth members to develop goal setting skills through hands-on experiences. Consider ways to build concrete steps for 4-H members to learn and grow through the goal setting process and to gain goal management skills. Adults can help:

- Share knowledge that goal setting involves a conscious shift in behavior.
- Suggest guidelines for selecting a goal (something meaningful, realistic, and that will require youth members to stretch their skills and abilities).
- Introduce strategies for effective goal management (Goal selection, Pursuit of Strategies, and Shifting gears when faced with challenges or barriers—known as the GPS model).
- Provide opportunities and encourage self-reflection throughout the GPS process in order to internalize lessons learned.
- Encourage members who meet their goals to share results with others.
- Encourage members who did not reach their goals to identify where their plan of action went wrong and try again using different strategies or set new a goal.
- Model goal management behaviors—show them that you use the GPS system to set goals for yourself.



Tips for Goal Setting Conversations

1. The goal of the mentor/mentee conversations is three-fold:
 - a. Help the adult volunteer understand and recognize each youth's current goal management skills.
 - b. Help the youth member understand their current goal management skills and learn areas for improvement
 - c. Help the adult volunteer guide the youth member towards growing their skills in goal management and development of the 6 Cs.
2. DO NOT share your rankings with youth members. We do not want youth members to feel that they are being scored. The intention of collecting survey information from adults is so that you know where each youth member is, how to help support him/her to grow and progress, and to track growth and progress over time.
3. DO ask youth members to share their Leadership Project GPS goals on page 31 of *iThrive* and their Contribution GPS goals on page 36 with you.
4. Ask each youth member open-ended questions that follow the experiential learning cycle model. Some questions could be:
 - a. Tell me about how you chose your goal and strategies. What challenges were you able to identify challenges that may get in the way of achieving your goal? How did it feel to set goals using the GPS model?
 - b. Tell me about the progress you are making toward reaching your goal. Are you able to stick to your plan? Why or why not? How would you describe the level of effort you are putting toward your goal? Who have you asked for help in reaching your goal? What strategies did you shift to meet your goal?
 - c. What are your next steps toward reaching your goal? What support do you need to help reach your goal? How do you feel like you know when it's time to re-evaluate your goal and maybe change the goal or strategies?
5. Talk openly with each youth member about your impression of their skills so far. Some times, youth members are more critical of their skills than you will be. In addition to helping youth accurately self-reflect it's important that they see another perspective. A couple of good opening statements are:
 - a. "I've seen you demonstrate....toward achieving your goal."
 - b. "You have worked so hard to reach your goal. This is something that I've noticed that may help you...."
 - c. "I remember a time when that happened to me. What I did when presented with that challenge was.... It seemed to make a difference for me. What parts of that story do you think you could use?"



6. Be sure to share personal stories or experiences that you had as a young person. Have a story in mind that demonstrates some challenges you experienced, how you adjusted your goal or strategies, and what you learned.
7. ALWAYS close the conversation by providing support and encouragement for effort and persistence that they have demonstrated toward reaching their goals.

Measuring Growth

As mentioned in the section “Measuring Success” on pages 13–14, if you have not already done so, please go into your 4-H Online Record Book and complete the baseline GPS Rubrics for each youth that you have chosen to follow. At this time you may also want to complete the “C” Rubrics. Each volunteer mentors the same members throughout the entire year and completes all rubrics on these youth members.

1. Before completing baseline rubrics you will need to participate in a Rubric Calibration Training. This training is offered in several ways, choose one that works for you.
 - a. Webinar trainings through the State 4-H Office. See the monthly 4-H updates and/or your county 4-H newsletter for scheduled events.
 - b. Video trainings through the 4-H YDP Web site, www.ca4h.org
 - c. Face-to-face trainings offered in the county.
 - d. Face-to-face trainings offered at State Leaders’ Forum, State Leadership Conference, and other statewide training events.
2. Once you have completed the Rubric Calibration training, complete the baseline set of rubrics, sometime between October and January, set aside 10 -15 minutes to talk individually to each member for whom you mentor. You will **not** directly share your answers with youth members, but the information will help you have intentional growth conversations with them. Use the sample Rubrics in the Appendix on page 80 to help structure the conversations. The goal of these conversations is to help youth to reflect on their skills. Use the Tips for Goal Setting Conversations on page 49.
3. At the end of the project year, when you have completed the second set of rubrics, sometime between April and June, talk individually to each of your mentees about their progress during the year. (See tips for Goal Setting Conversations above.)

Young people will record these progress meetings in their *iThrive Member Guide* and ask for your signature.

See the Yearly Timeline on page 16.



Objective:

Work together to solve a problem, and learn about choosing different strategies, and being persistent to reach a goal.

Time:

20 minutes

Materials:

10, 8 oz. paper or plastic cups per team, one rubber band and string tool for each team. Instructions to make rubber band and string tools: on one standard size rubber band—it must fit snugly over one cup—tie four 12 inch string pieces. Tie strings at 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock, and 9 o'clock on the rubber band. In other words, the strings should divide the rubber band into quadrants.

Facilitator Tips:

Let the teams decide how to stack the cups. If you start the game with the cups scattered randomly (some up, some down, and some on the side) it makes the challenge more difficult. If you scatter the cups all up or all down, it makes the challenge easier.

This activity is not designed as a competition between teams, however if the team members view it that way that's okay. If a member of a team touches a cup with anything other than the rubber band and string tool, the whole team starts over.

Assign an activity leader to facilitate the activity and keep time.

Cup Towers

(pages 25 & 26 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Scatter the cups on the table or floor.
2. Divide your group into teams of 3 or 4 people.
3. Instruct teams that their goal is to build a tower with the 10 cups. Four cups should be used to form the base, with the remaining cups stacked to form a pyramid shape. In the end, the top of the tower should have one cup.
4. Here are the rules:
 - a. each member of the team needs to control at least one string
 - b. you can only use the rubber band and string tool to get the job done
 - c. if anything or anyone touches the cups with hands or body the team must start from the beginning
5. When everyone understands the rules, let them begin.
6. Allow enough time for all teams to complete the task.
7. Bring the whole group back together to debrief and apply what was learned. Ask:

What Happened?

What feelings did you have during that activity? What strategies seemed to work? How did it feel when other teams were getting it?

So What?

What does this remind you of in the real world? Have you ever had a goal that was hard to reach? What strategies did you use to achieve it?

Now What?

When you have a difficult goal ahead of you, what do YOU think you might do next time?



Wrap Up Statement:

Research shows that people who reach their goals are persistent and resourceful in getting to their goals. Michael Jordan got cut from his high school basketball team. Einstein got Cs in school. However, they kept on being persistent in their effort to reach their goals.



Objective:

Work together to solve a problem, and learn about knowing when to change your goal and when to change your strategies.

Time:

25 minutes

Materials:

15 sheets of regular copier paper per team, one tape measurer or yard stick, stop watch or clock—the stop watch on a phone works great.

Facilitator Tips:

Read the script as it is written and follow the specific time codes. The interruptions in the activity are designed to throw obstacles in the way so that teams decide to either change their goal or change their strategies. The script is also designed so that interruptions are respectful. The tone of interruptions should be respectful and apologetic.

Assign an activity leader to facilitate the activity and keep time.

Paper Towers

(page 28 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Divide your group into teams of 3 or 4 people.
2. Give 15 sheets of paper to each team.
3. Read the script below as written. Pay particular attention to the time adjustments as described.

“Here’s a challenge for you. We’d like to see which team can build the tallest tower out of nothing but paper.

Each team has three jobs:

- The first job is to choose a group name
- The second job is to choose your goal. How high, in inches, does your team think your tower is going to be?
- The third job is to build the tower with only paper. Nothing else.

The point is to set an accurate goal AND build the tallest tower.

The team that builds the tallest tower AND reaches its goal will win. If you set your goal too low you might not win because another team could achieve a higher goal. If you set your goal too high you might not win because you won’t be able to reach it.

What questions do you have? (Answer any questions, restating any instructions you have given so far.

Your team will have 1 minute to choose a group name and set a goal for your tower. How many inches tall do you think you can make it?”

4. Allow 1 minute to pass. Record everyone’s team name and height goals in a place where they are easy to see and refer back to them during the game.



5. Now say,

“When I say ‘Go!’ you’ll have 15 minutes to build your tower. Let’s see who can reach their goal and build the tallest tower..... Go!”

6. Allow 1 minute of building to pass. Interrupt the group by saying:

“My apologies for the interruption, will everyone please stop building. It looks like we are running way behind schedule. You now only have 4 minutes to finish your towers. To be fair I am going to let you change your goal, if you want to. If you still think you can meet your goal you can stick with it. You have 30 SECONDS to make your decision and tell me if you have a new goal height.”

7. Allow 30 seconds to pass. Then record new goals.

“You now have 4 minutes to complete your tower. Please continue.”

8. Allow 1 minute of building to pass.

“Now we’re going to make this a bit more challenging. You can only fold your papers horizontally; not vertically. If you have vertical folds in your tower, your team will be disqualified.”

9. Demonstrate how the papers can and cannot be folded.

“You have 30 seconds to decide if you want to adjust your goal.”

10. Record new goals.

“Please continue.”

11. Allow 2 minutes to pass.

“Now that you’ve made it this far, I’m going to give you one more chance to adjust your goal. You have 30 seconds to decide.”



12. Record new goals. Allow 2 more minutes of building to pass. Announce that time is up and give all the groups a round of applause. Measure each tower and record results.
13. Praise their effort and persistence to reach their goal, even in the face of challenges.
14. Bring the whole group back together to debrief and apply what was learned. Ask:

What Happened?

How did you decide what goals to set? How did it feel when you needed to change your goal along the way? Why was it important to change your goal as the challenge kept changing?

So What?

In real life, as you work towards your goals, do things sometimes change? Why is it important to adjust your goals sometimes? How do you know when you should stick to your original goal or switch it up?

Now What?

Let's say you wanted to be a marine biologist and at some point you realize that every time you get on a boat you get seasickness that doesn't seem to go away. If your Spark is marine animals, what else can you do to use your Spark to make a difference in the world? What might be a new goal?

Wrap Up Statement:

It's okay to feel bad when you don't reach a goal. What's important is how you bounce back and what you do next. Just because reaching a goal is challenging doesn't mean you should choose the easy path. Remember, your brain grows and makes new connections each time you try again. Eventually, you will feel the task becoming easier or your goal more reachable.



Chapter 6

What's the Point?

The sixth chapter in *iThrive* is about helping youth members understand how they know if they are thriving. They will learn about the 6 Cs and indicators of thriving and then practice using self-reflection as a tool to grow their Cs. Project Leaders are charged with a profoundly important task: to support the development of competent, confident, caring, 4-H members of character who are connected to their communities where they make positive contributions.

Project Leader Tips...

The development of the 6 Cs is a lifelong endeavor. In the 4-H YDP you can easily see examples of how members grow and develop their Cs. Reinforce to your members that the more intentional they are about setting goals to develop their Cs, the more likely they are to achieve growth.

Listen and watch for members to demonstrate growth in confidence, competence, connection, character, caring, and/or contribution skills. Take advantage of opportunities to voice and label the C that you noticed.

Am I Thriving Now?

Definition

The Thrive Foundation for Youth of Menlo Park, researcher Richard Lerner from Tufts University, and others partnered to develop the indicators of thriving. These indicators or qualities have been identified by researchers and scientists over the years to describe characteristics that successful young people have in common. The indicators are grouped into the 6 Cs: contribution, competence, connection, character, caring, and confidence. All Cs are of equal importance.

Getting Started

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 6, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the iexplore and ireflect activities. The iexplore activities are described in detail in this chapter on pages 62–63. The ireflect activities are all in *iThrive*.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

- Read the introduction on page 32 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Complete the What's Your C? as it is described.
- Complete the ireflect activity on page 36.
- Coach youth members in their Contribution goal and strategies selection as needed.
- Schedule individual meetings with selected members to discuss their growth goals for GPS and Contribution. (See Tips for Goal Setting Conversations, page 49).



Background and Key Concepts

View the indicators as a doorway to think more intentionally about how to encourage youth members to develop the skills necessary to pursue their sparks and passions, see challenges as learning opportunities, and be more effective goal managers. In the 4-H community, this starts with intentional, purposeful individual and group conversations with youth in a caring environment.

Every effort should be made to ensure that adults are aware of some basic strategies for including reflection and self-awareness activities into program delivery. Adults can create structured self-reflection opportunities for 4-H youth in a variety of ways. Adults can facilitate conversations in the project setting around the 6 Cs of positive youth development. The 6 Cs are:

COMPETENCE is the possession of required skill, knowledge, qualification, or capacity. A person who is competent in their spark will have success in the social, cognitive, and vocational arenas. Indicators of competence include:

- Healthy Habits
- Life Skills
- Love of Learning
- Emotional Competence
- Social Skills

CONNECTION is demonstrated through relationships with others, and with schools, and other institutions. In the 4-H YDP, we strive to make healthy connections with others, such as in youth-adult partnerships, where adults and youth work constructively together and acknowledge and support the skill sets and abilities of the other. Indicators of connection include:

- Positive Relationships
- Spiritual Growth

CHARACTER is the possession of self-control, morals, and spirituality; demonstration of positive behaviors; and respect for rules and standards. Someone who displays good character makes decisions grounded in a clear sense of right and wrong, acts selflessly for the benefit of an individual or others, and is honest. The indicator is:

- Character

CARING is having empathy and identity with others—including those who are different. A caring person honors and protects all living things and the world's resources. When someone is caring, they stand up for fairness and freedom from discrimination, and share their skills to improve the lives of those less fortunate. The indicator is:

- Caring



CONFIDENCE is demonstrated through self-esteem, identity, and a belief in the future. True confidence is built upon belief in oneself and placing value on one's talents and abilities. Someone with confidence can apply their strengths to areas of self-doubt or things that are difficult to change, and will work to enhance their skills and stand up for what they believe in. Indicators of confidence include:

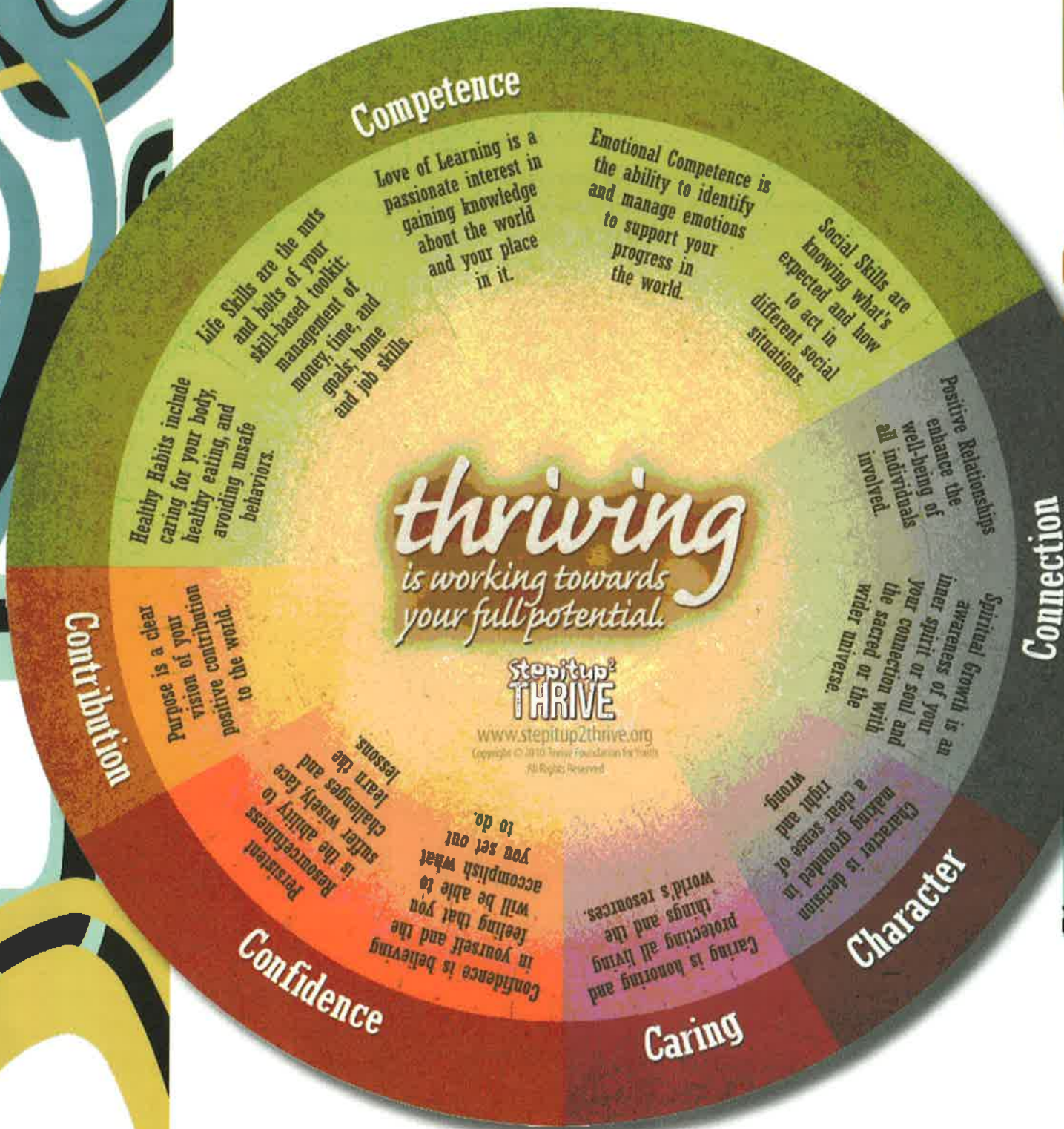
- Persistent Resourcefulness
- Confidence

CONTRIBUTION is a behavior or action that has a positive impact on one's self, family, community, and society. In order to make a contribution, you must have a clear vision of where you want to go, what you want in life, and why. Contribution is indicated by:

- Purpose



INDICATORS OF THRIVING WHEEL



Tips for Building Indicators of Thriving

- Encourage members to understand what each of the 6 Cs mean, how they view their skills and strengths related to each one, and be able to identify possible opportunities to learn and grow through 4-H involvement.
- Encourage members to develop self-reflection skills. Self-reflection is at the core of the 4-H program delivery model. It is inherent in 4-H Record Books, projects, activities, events, and youth leadership development components of the program. The largest opportunity for growth through self-reflection is within the context of a strong youth-adult partnership.
- Introduce the definitions for indicators of thriving to the project group. Keep in mind that the discussion should be conversational, and geared towards engaging 4-H members in a positive, self-reflective dialogue centered on increasing skills through practice and effort. Start conversations with questions like:
 - “How can I help you learn something new this year?”
 - “What would it look like if you focused on getting better at one area of the project?”
 - “If there was one thing you could learn this year, what would it be and why?”
 - “What excites you about this project? What do you want to get better at?”
- Ask follow-up questions to clarify what youth members say. Remember, thriving centers around the concept that young people can always change, grow, improve, and reach their potential through learning something new and practicing particularly challenging tasks.
- Youth members are guided in *iThrive* to set one goal each year on a pre-selected “C”. For the 2011-2012 project year, everyone will set a goal about Contribution. You can decide that the whole project group will work on one Contribution goal and strategies; for example, you could tie your Contribution goals and strategies into the Revolution of Responsibility Centennial project. Look for Revolution of Responsibility opportunities to be announced in the fall of 2011. You could also divide your members up into smaller groups so that people with similar sparks are working together to use their spark to make a difference.

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● Consider new ways to create opportunities for 4-H members to reach project goals within the context of the 6 Cs. Here are some suggestions, but keep in mind that many of these activities can build more than one C and are just starting points:

- Improve competence through project activities that teach, learn, instruct, present, read, build, and design
- Increase connections through goals that include to help, guide, mentor, and build relationships
- Build character through leadership, conflict resolution, and decision-making that demonstrates integrity and/or a strong moral compass
- Be more caring as demonstrated by activities that are kind, sympathetic, supportive, empathetic, and motivate others
- Strive for confidence through practice, persistence, and effort
- Be able to contribute through activities that involve volunteerism, service, leadership, and mentoring



Objective:

Understand the definitions of the 6 Cs and the application of each to 4-H projects and activities.

Time:

30 minutes

Materials:

Thriving Indicator Wheel (*iThrive*, page 34), What's Your C? quotes (*iThrive*, page 35), pencils or pens

Facilitator Tips:

You could make this activity more kinesthetic by placing copies of quotes around the room and giving each person a card with one of the Cs. Ask everyone to walk around the room and match their card to the quote that best demonstrates the C they have in their hand.

What's Your C?

(page 33 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Instruct members to look at the Thriving Indicator Wheel on page 34 of *iThrive*. Explain the 6 Cs and point out the indicators and definitions under each of the Cs.
2. Instruct members to turn to page 35 and look at six quotes from 4-H members. Working individually, have members write the C that is BEST reflected in the quote.
3. Allow them to work for about 10 minutes or until everyone has completed their page.
4. Discuss their answers to each of the quotes. See the answer key on page 62.
5. Discuss the following questions:

What Happened?

Was it easy to determine which C went with which quote? Why do you think that is?

So What?

Through your 4-H experience have you been able to improve on one or more of the C's? Which ones? Why do you think it's important to reflect on your growth toward the C's? What do you think will happen if you set goals around improving your C's?

Now What?

Let's say you're going to work on your Confidence. What would be an example of a goal to help build confidence? What would be some strategies to help you get to that goal? Describe how the Indicators of Thriving and Goal Management skills are linked together?



What's Your C? (answer key)

Competence

"This is my sixth year in the leadership project and I've continued to learn more about running a meeting, making goals, teaching others, planning events, making motions, and the parliamentary procedure."

-Tyler, San Bernardino County

Confidence

"When I first started 4-H I would always sit in the back and I wouldn't talk to anyone, but as I got more involved I started to do more with leadership in my club. I also started talking to people I normally wouldn't have talked too."

-Kyle, Kern County

Caring

Morgan enjoys presenting demonstrations about proper equine care. Morgan says, "I think the members appreciate having a peer present information in a way they can understand."

-Morgan, Humboldt County

Character

Chelsea uses equine therapy with Cricket, her horse; to mentor a non-verbal autistic child named Maya. There are many healing and therapeutic benefits to equine therapy. Chelsea dedicates her time each week to ensuring that Maya has access to such critical therapy. The services Chelsea provides to those in need, do not go unrecognized in her community. Maya's mother says that Chelsea is "disciplined, honest, sincere, selfless and dedicated. She has not only changed the life of my daughter in a positive manner but she has changed our lives as well."

-Chelsea, Orange County

Contribution

Zoey demonstrates civic participation outside of the 4-H program. For five years, she has been active in the Natural Conservation Service, selling trees and promoting their use as protection for soil and a barrier to wind erosion. She has put over 2,500 trees and shrubs in the hands of Siskiyou county residents for planting.

-Zoey, Siskiyou County

Connection

Lauren is sensitive to the special needs of members in her club and is able to work with all people with respect, integrity, and understanding. She is able to mentor her members and assist them with problems without simply giving them a straightforward answer. Her ability to guide and instruct while letting others learn, is what makes her an "exemplary 4-H member and youth leader", according to her club leader.

-Lauren, Sacramento County



Chapter 7

What's the Point?

The final chapter helps youth members remember key concepts learned through *iThrive*. In addition to review, the primary purpose is a guided celebration of the year together. Celebrations are important markers of milestones; they create belonging and connections among your members and provide great opportunities to bring families together in the 4-H community. In this chapter we will also review what has been learned during this Leadership Project.

Project Leader Tips...

As you begin planning the celebration, involve young people in the planning and decision-making—utilize what you learned about thriving youth-adult partnerships. Don't forget to capitalize on what you know about each member's spark, reinforce growth-oriented language, and be sure to utilize GPS! Allow opportunities for self-reflection during the process and at the celebration.

- Invite families to attend a presentation or skit about Sparks, Growth Mindset, GPS goal setting, and the 6 Cs.
- Plan a presentation to your 4-H club; show slides or photos taken throughout the year.
- Make statements of appreciation to each other, read the 4-H Pledge choral reading, and hand out pins.
- Make it memorable.
- Make it matter.

Celebrate!

Getting Started

Read this chapter for more information on celebration.

Take a look through *iThrive*, Chapter 7, to be comfortable with the lesson plan. Be prepared to help guide youth through the iexplore and ireflect activities. Encourage members to share their *iThrive* Leadership Project stories in the county 4-H newsletter.

iThrive Chapter Checklist:

- Read the introduction on page 37 together. Make sure members understand the concept.
- Complete the iexplore crossword puzzle found inside the back cover. (Answer key on page 65).
- Complete the ireflect activity on page 39. The ireflect activity helps members look ahead and continue to use skills they have learned. Youth members will set an affirmation for future reflection that encourages them to continue to use the skills they have learned.
- Plan a celebration that is meaningful to the members of the Leadership Project. The celebration can be very simple or more elaborate and include family members. In anticipation of the celebration, order an *iThrive* pin for each member of the Leadership Project who has successfully completed all of the work in *iThrive*. This includes completion of surveys in the 4-H Online Record Book.
- Make copies of the 4-H Pledge Choral Reading on page 66 if you plan to use it in the ceremony.



Objective:

Review key ideas learned in the 4-H *iThrive* Leadership Project

Time:

20 minutes

Materials:

Crossword Puzzle (*iThrive*, page 44), pencils or pens

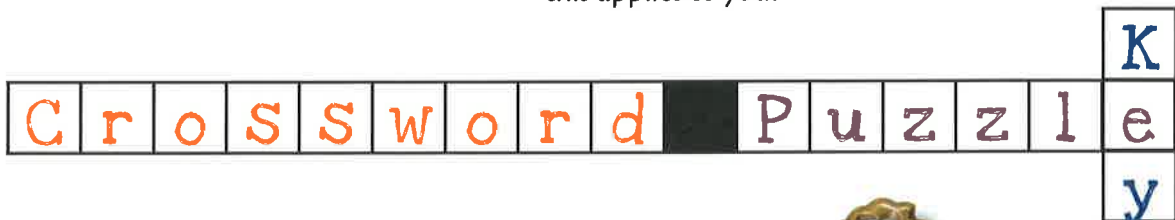
Facilitator Tips:

Allow discussion and collaboration to complete the puzzle.

4-H *iThrive* Crossword Puzzle (page 44 in *iThrive*)

Directions:

1. Instruct members to complete the crossword puzzle to the best of their ability.
2. Suggest that they can flip back through *iThrive* to remind themselves of ideas and words.
3. When all members have completed the crossword puzzle, review their answers and reinforce the concepts by asking for personal examples. Here are some ideas:
 - How did you apply that concept to your work as a Junior or Teen Leader this year?
 - How do you think you might apply that idea in the future?
 - What are some questions you have about how this applies to you?



Across

3. caring
5. confidence
6. contribution
7. strategies
9. character
10. persistence

Down

1. effort
2. shift
3. connections
4. learning
7. spark
8. goal



4-H Pledge Choral Reading★★

Ask one person to be the “Reader.” The Reader begins by reading aloud one line at a time and everyone else reads aloud the appropriate response in unison.

Reader	I pledge my Head to clearer thinking.
Everyone	Success will come through persistent effort. I appreciate that my brain grows when I do something hard and even if I am not successful, I have learned.
Reader	my Heart to greater loyalty.
Everyone	My Spark gives me joy and energy! My Spark can help me feel connected to others. It helps me develop confidence and competence.
Reader	my Hands to larger service.
Everyone	I will discover ways to use my Spark to make a positive difference in the world. I will continue to develop the qualities of character and caring to help me make positive contributions to my communities.
Reader	and my Health to better living for my club, my community, my country, and my world.
Everyone	Developing goal management skills will help me to know where I’m going, how I’m going to get there, and what to do when things get in my way. Having a growth mindset helps me overcome challenges in my life.
Reader	As a 4-H member, I thrive. Thriving means that I am on the path to reaching my full potential.
Everyone	Through my leadership skills, I will encourage others to develop skills toward reaching their full potential—and Thrive!

** Choral readings were used in Greek theater as a way to create audience participation. Today, classroom teachers use choral readings as a fun way to help students with reading aloud skills. This activity is not intended as a religious or cult experience. Find other ways to mark the occasion if using this would be uncomfortable to you.



Resources

Information...

You can find more resources and information about thriving on the state 4-H Web site, www.ca4h.org/

All of the activity outlines and handouts are on the Web site.

Contact any of the county Master Trainers for support, questions, and assistance.
Contact the county 4-H staff.

As we move forward on the journey to thrive, there will be continuing education opportunities through webinars and educational sessions at State Leaders' Forum and State Leadership Conference.

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Search Institute's web page listing top 10 most common sparks in American Teens with a full list of sparks included: www.search-institute.org/sparks

StepItUp2Thrive Resource Center, Thrive Foundation for Youth:
www.stepitup2thrive.org



Appendix

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University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources



Conversation Starters...

Why This Is Important for Young People—and for You

How much would a parent give to hear these words from one of his or her children:

“When I have a family of my own, I want to raise them exactly as my parents have raised my siblings and me.”

That’s what Angelica Carvajal, a thriving 17-year-old at Middletown Senior High School in Connecticut, says of her parents.

Sparks

Here are some of the specific things she says her parents do to be “the wind beneath her wings,” things that she would want to emulate:

- They always tell us the truth about life. They don’t try to paint a pretty picture of life, but they tell us about the realities of life. That makes us trust them more.
- My dad is really passionate about all of us working hard, getting good grades, and doing well in everything we take on. I wouldn’t say he shouts, but he IS passionate, and we listen to what he says.
- I love fashion, but my mother tells me, “Who you are is not what you wear. Who you are is what you give back to the world.” My mom keeps me on track with my values.
- My dad says things like, “If you want to be a professional and not live paycheck-to-paycheck, you need to work hard.” Or, “Don’t depend on the person you marry to take care of you. You need to be fine on your own, to be independent and successful on your own.”
- Maybe some parents don’t realize that their kids listen to them, so they don’t realize how important it is to talk to their kids. Both my parents really talk with us, and we do listen.

At Search Institute, we’ve been studying young people who are thriving for the past five years. Young people who are not just surviving, not just getting by, but who are truly doing well—aware of and using their interests, talents, and abilities; achieving their goals; living up to and beyond their potential.



We've discovered three things that, when they are all present in young people's lives, almost guarantee that they will thrive:

1. Young people know their "sparks," the special interests and abilities they are passionate about
2. They pursue their sparks and use them to contribute to a better world
3. Their parents and other adults support, encourage, and help them with their sparks.

This resources is intended to help you help young people thrive, by addressing all three of these important factors in one simple way: by talking with young people. Now look back at that bullet list of wonderful things that Angelica praises her parents for—how many of them are about her parents talking with her?!

What do we mean by "simply talking with young people"? Well, what we mean is having real, person-to-person conversations with them, talks that help them discover their own abilities and possibilities, talks that guide them to try new things and take next steps, talks that reveal your own struggles and dreams and lessons learned, so that your children can learn from them. Real adult-to-child conversations, not just pal-to-pal chats.

Are you interested? We hope so, because we believe how you talk with children can make a huge difference in their future success, fulfillment, and contribution to the world.

In the rest of this guide, you'll find easy-to-use information about the skills you can practice, the ways you can set up good situations for talks, and the kinds of questions and ideas that help make these conversations work. As you work your way through, you'll find all kinds of ways to help children find and nurture their sparks, and you may just find that your own sparks are rekindled in the process!

Things to know and skills to practice

Have you already been having thriving conversations with the young people in your life? Are you just getting started? Do you want to become more intentional, more effective as a young person's guide, role model, cheerleader, teacher, or coach? Take a look at the skills below—you likely have a number of them already, but perhaps there are a few you could bone up on, deepen your knowledge of, or apply differently.

Listening First

The focus is talking "with," not talking "to." And since adults spend much of their time talking "to," we sometimes have to stop our selves and listen first. Ask open-ended questions. Give a little silence that opens the space for young people to find their own voices. And that ties to the next point.



Creating a Feeling of Safety

In order for many people to talk about their innermost self, their dreams, their passions, they need to feel safe. That may mean knowing they won't be made fun of or put down. It may mean talking while walking or driving, so they don't have to looking eye-to-eye with someone. It may mean talking after spending quite a bit of time together doing other kinds of activities and getting to know each other well.

Practice making it safe for young people to talk with you. Keep their confidences if they ask you to (unless, of course, it entails harm to them or others). Respond with respect, interest, and positive ideas. Try having talks in different kinds of situations and see which situations seem to feel "safest" to the young person you want to talk with.

Allowing for Individuality

It's a cliché to compare the uniqueness of human beings to the uniqueness of each snowflake—but clichés emerge from widely known truths. In regard to thriving, it is certainly true that each of us has his or her own personal best, his or her own ways of fulfilling their special potential. But there are some particular kinds of individuality to be sure to keep in mind when you're hoping to be a "thriving guide" for a young person, including age, temperament and personality, and stage of development.

Age. Remember that young people have different abilities at different ages. The youngest children may well reveal that they have passions and talents, but be unable to focus on them for very long. And the difference in planning, decision making, and problem solving between a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old can be huge. Have high expectations for kids of any age, but make sure they are age-appropriate.

Temperament and personality. Is the girl or boy you're working with a highly sensitive person (HSP)? Is he or she outgoing or shy? Talkative or reserved? The kind of person who laughs long and loud or who chuckles quietly? Does he or she shake off disappointments or take them to heart? Does he or she prefer things to move in logical, predictable directions, or does he or she like to just jump in and see what happens? A performer or a behind-the-scenes person?

All these kinds of differences in temperament or personality in young people may make a difference in how you approach and talk with her or him. One child may get so excited and think so far ahead of where he is that he might need help to rein in his imagination and focus on next steps. Another might be a little insecure about her talent and need more encouragement to be bold and confident.

Practice observing the young person you want to help thrive—what kind of person is he or she? What styles of interaction seem to be most effective?



Practice observing yourself, too! Are you more demanding of others than yourself, or less? Do you treat all young people as equals, or do you find yourself sometimes acting from assumptions or stereotypes? How often do you say “You should...” compared to “What do you think”? Broadening the range of your interaction and speaking styles and making sure you are phrasing things in positive, empowering ways will increase your effectiveness with young people in all your spheres of influence.

Stages of development. Numerous aspects of a young person’s development—cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and more—need to be accessed for a young person to thrive. Yet few, if any, people develop at the same rate in all aspects. So a young person may be a straight-A student in academics, yet lag behind some of her peers in emotional self-regulation. Another might be very astute in observing and understanding others’ feelings, but not yet have developed strong skills in focus and concentration.

Part of your “work” as a thriving guide may be to notice a young person’s strengths and challenges, and look for ways to help her or him raise the levels of any developmental areas that need it.

Affirming the different pathways to thriving

Some people seem to know what they want to be, what their spark is, from the time they are very young. Others discover their passion during elementary, middle, or high school. Many really “find themselves” in the exciting intellectual atmosphere of higher education. Others seem to continue searching, even give up searching for awhile, then later in life suddenly emerge as a writer or an artist or a teacher. In fact, the existence of the common term “late bloomer” testifies to the relative commonness of the latter experience.

Finding your spark and moving from surviving to thriving can take a number of pathways, so it’s important to not try to force a particular trajectory on any particular young person. Instead, do your best to discover the young person’s natural pace and rhythm. Sometimes he or she may need to time to think about the possibilities, or a nudge to start looking for new ones.

Walking a fine line sometimes

Helping a young person thrive is more of an art than a science. Sometimes a subtle change in tone or emphasis can make all the difference in whether good advice is accepted or rejected. This calls for skill on the part of the adult in observing his or her own behavior, body language, and manner of talking.



Practice being aware of the sometimes fine line between empty praise and helpful encouragement. Notice whether you're going beyond support to doing some of the work for them. Be intentional about whether someone needs just a nudge, or to be pressed a bit, or really responds to being pushed. And most of all, keep an eye on the creative tension between realism and idealism. When a young person says his spark is to become an astronaut, yet he doesn't seem to have an affinity for science, ask yourself what's really going on. Is that really his spark? Is he actually responding to or eager for the sense of adventure and exploration that an astronaut represents? Do you need to help him find another activity that satisfies that urge for some healthy risk-taking? Or do you need to find him some tutoring in science subjects?

Converting a dream into steps to take

Young people often need help to see how current classes and chores and tasks have anything to do with their ultimate dream. It's up to you as the adult to help them begin to break a big goal into achievable steps.

When a young person says she wants to be the president someday, help her see the value in signing up for debate and drama now by pointing out that the skills she learns in those classes will be called on whenever she makes a speech in the future.

Teaching good values

It's not enough for a young person to have talent and a supportive adult or two. Two matters of character are vital to thriving as well: 1) developing the motivation, dedication, confidence, and discipline to excel at his or her spark, and 2) using that spark to give back to or contribute to the world.

When the supportive adults around a young person, including parents, extended family, teachers, clergy, coaches, and mentors, present a united front on important values, a young person is more likely to begin to claim those values as his or her own. And when those same adults live out those values through their own lives, that role modeling goes even farther than repeated reminders about "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again".

Show them the options—with enthusiasm!

Principles of Thriving Conversations

As you get started or continue with thriving conversations with the young people in your life, consider these principles. They may help you be clearer and more intentional about keeping thriving as a primary goal.

You can't start too soon.

While little ones who are not yet talking can't really participate in thriving conversations, and elementary-age children may not be ready to commit to a spark with dedication, you can't start too soon in nurturing in your children a spirit of adventure, exploration, and contribution.



It's never too late.

It's never too late for a young person to receive encouragement and assistance in finding or rekindling a spark—and it's never too late for adults, either! Besides, some people have a longer timeline in discovering their sparks, so sometimes patience and persistence are key.

Know yourself, but stay open to possibilities.

One of the best ways to talk with young people is to tell them about yourself genuinely and authentically. Think about your own history, and share with young people your dreams, your struggles, your successes, and what it's been like. And remember that if you aren't feeling very "sparkling" lately, it might be time to open your eyes to discovering a new spark for yourself.

Know the child, but be open to surprises.

If you are a child's parent, you know that child well—but that knowledge can sometimes blind you to change in your child. If your child has been a marvelous singer since she was a toddler, be sure to remind her of that when she's trying to decide whether to be in chorus this year or not. But at the same time, be sure to listen if she wants to try dance or gymnastics or debate this year instead.

Watch for prime moments.

These thriving conversations don't have to be artificial or constrained. Watch for prime moments to bring up the ideas. For example, when the young person has gotten a report card (good or bad!), when he or she has won or lost a competition, when you're watching an inspiring movie or TV show together or have enjoyed a live performance of some kind, when he or she announces "I'm bored!"....all are good times to talk about possibilities, passion, and spark.

Sometimes the best moments come when you're not expecting them—and they may not be convenient. A young person is engrossed in an activity, and on your way out the door you ask, "So, what are you working on?" What was a simple, throwaway question for you might be the trigger that evokes a whole lot of passion and conversation. These moments may not happen on your schedule, but they may be the times a child is most open to the conversation.

Don't give up.

If at first the conversations don't go smoothly, or you feel as if you're talking to a brick wall, wait a few days and try again in a new way. Check yourself to be sure you're listening more than you're talking, and that you're saying more positive things than negative things. And remember that finding and acting on our sparks is a lifelong process; it doesn't all happen at once.



Don't go it alone.

As with so many other aspects of youth development, a young person's thriving doesn't depend on just one person, whether that's a parent, an uncle, a mentor, or a neighbor. Think of the movie *Akeelah and the Bee*—and think of yourself as just one of that young person's 50,000 coaches. And if the young person you're trying to coach doesn't seem to have enough cheerleaders and guides and mentors, consider doing a little recruiting on his or her behalf.

Suggestions for using: Think back to situations you've experienced with a young person when you could have used a bit of guidance to enrich a conversation. Then scan through these thriving conversation starters for ideas. Remember this resource next time you're hoping to encourage and aid a young person toward thriving, and start being aware of possible moments for using them!

Conversation Starter 1: "You're Really Good at This!"

Finding the Moment

Catch a young person doing well, and then say something about it! It could be anything from spelling to soccer to singing. It could be happening in a formal setting like a class or a game, during a practice, or during a quiet moment in the car or on the bus after an event. All that matters is that the thriving conversation is started right away, when the "doing well" is fresh.

Questions, Probes, and Ideas

You really seem to be a natural at this.

- Have you ever thought about how this talent could be something you get paid for later in life?
- Is this really fun for you?
- Have you always been good at this or did you have to learn it first?
- What do you like about it?
- Do you have any goals around this? Anything I can do to help?
- I love seeing you doing well and enjoying it.
-

Follow-through

No matter what the talent or skill, there are places to go with it. Good spellers can compete in spelling bees, help check her friends' English papers, or consider becoming an editor as a job. A good soccer player can not only continue to play on better teams, and improve his own skills, but also become a coach for younger players or perhaps get a scholarship for college. Be creative and help your young person open up to the myriad possibilities.



Conversation Starter 2: "This Seems to Make You Happy"

Finding the Moment

The key to finding this is to notice—notice when a young person is having a flow experience...not just the momentary happiness of an ice cream sundae, but the sustained "time doesn't exist" thrill of spending two hours in front of the computer editing video footage and then proudly showing others the resulting 5-minute clip. Or the hours spent curled up in a comfortable chair to plow through the fourth Harry Potter novel in one sitting. Or it might be that a child who has been bored through the first five days of a vacation suddenly lights up when you stop by the roadside to say hello to a group of beautiful horses.

Questions, Probes, and Ideas

- What does it feel like when you're doing this activity?
- How did you become so motivated?
- Do any of your friends like doing this, too?
- Let's figure out a way for you to do more of this!
- Would you teach me a little about it so I can share in the fun or understand you better?
- What are the things you like about it?
- How does a person move to the next level?
- Is there anything else that makes you feel this way?

Follow-through

Noticing their enjoyment can affirm for a young person that this talent, skill, or spark is something special about her or him. A great way to follow through is to check back about the activity in a few days or a week by subtly suggesting there's a next step: What's your next film project going to be? Have you found any other books you like as much as the Harry Potters?



Conversation Starter 3: "Have You Ever Thought of...?"

Finding the Moment

This is a question for a quiet time, while you're traveling, sitting on a bench at the park, taking a break from a bike ride, or laying on a hillside waiting for Fourth of July fireworks to start. It might also work well right after you hear the young person heave a sigh of boredom.

Questions, Probes, and Ideas

- What's the coolest job you've ever heard of?
- I know someone who spends every workday taking care of elephants at an elephant sanctuary!
- Do you ever wish you were an inventor? An undersea diver? A scientist making a medical breakthrough?
- What would it be like to learn the folk dances of Sweden or the folk songs of Bali?
- Have you ever heard of people having a life list? [explain about it being a list of really interesting goals and things to do during one's life, then tell one from yours, like "join a tornado chase team" or "explore a real castle" or "record a song I've written".]

Follow-through

Make an agreement to take some steps toward meeting some life-list goals! Google the term "life list" and visit some of the sites that come up to see if you like the ideas there.

Conversation Starter 4: "I Had a Really Great Day Today; Let Me Tell You Why!"

Finding the Moment

Blow your kids' minds one day by bursting through the back door and, instead of immediately asking them about homework or complaining about the traffic, say exuberantly, "I had such a great day today!" Then, whether they ask about it or not, tell them what was so great about it. Let your enthusiasm spill into your tone of voice and your gestures; jump up and down, if that's your style. And set the stage for a confidential talk to begin.



Questions, Probes, and Ideas

- When's the last time you had a day like that?
- What were you doing? What was so great about it?
- [If it has been awhile] What could we do to make tomorrow or the next day a day like that for you?
- What would you want to do? How would you spend your time?
- What would you have accomplished at the end of the day?
- I don't always have days like this, but I love it when I do—and it happens more often when I do what I love. What do you love to do?
- One thing that always improves my days is doing something to help other people; did you help someone today?

Follow-through

Encourage your young person to make some plans for a really great day; offer to help on some parts of it, but be sure to leave room for his or her initiative, too. Consider planning a little surprise for the young person—a bit of extra time together, an unexpected early-breakfast date on a school day, a “new” used book or CD from the thrift store. Help him or her see that the more you visualize and plan for having great days, the more often they happen!

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