

Youth Adaptation

UNIT 5

POWER AND PARTICIPATION

Unit 5: SUMMARY OUTLINE

Exercise Number	Exercise	Alterations/Suggestions	Alternative Exercises/ Handouts
1	Recap from Unit 4 and Introduction to Unit 5	Take a bit more time to ensure key messages from Unit 4 have been learned	None
2	The Power Chair Game	See notes	None
3	Feeling Powerless	See notes	None
4	Different Dimensions of Power	See Notes	None
5	Participation	See Notes	AH 1, AH 2 and AH 3
6	Group Project	None	None
7	Recap and Summary	Take time to ensure key messages understood	None

Unit 5: ADDITIONAL TUTOR SUMMARY NOTES

This unit provides an excellent balance of learning methods which keeps young people motivated throughout. By relating power and participation to youth issues, young people are able to see where and how they could be more involved in their community, but more importantly why it is important that they get involved.

Exercise 1: Recap from Unit 4 and Introduction to Unit 5

Try to spend a bit more time than normal on this exercise to ensure key messages have been learned.

Exercise 2: The Power Chair Game

Depending on the setting you may have to think of different ways to position the chairs to begin with. In a school setting the participants may not find anything wrong with sitting in rows one behind the other as they are used to it. Therefore start with a circle and ask if it feels different from what they are used to.

Exercise 3: Feeling Powerless

Use the 'statements about participation' to form the basis of a discussion with the group on why they do not have their say.

If participants are unable to come up with situations in the second half of the exercise then 3 scenarios could be offered.

- Being in hospital – no dignity/not in control
- In police cells – fear of unknown/authority
- Witness to an action – fear of becoming victim

Exercise 4: Dimensions of Power

Dimensions could be explained as:

- One Dimensional Power - Visible
- Two Dimensional Power - Hidden
- Three Dimensional Power - Wasted

Discuss each dimension with group, write up thoughts, ask group to think of a scenario for each e.g. Getting lifted by the police, being barred from a youth club, etc.

Exercise 5: Participation

Some additional questions that could be included at Stage 2:

- Are they welcoming and accessible to young people?
- Do you think they want young people to be involved?
- What are the benefits of young people participating in decision making
 - o for young people?
 - o for organisations?
- What are the barriers to young people being involved in decision-making?

Additional handouts are included on the reasons why young people don't get involved. **AH 1, AH 2** and **AH 3**

Amended Community Partnership scenario:

A new Community Partnership has been set up in your area its aim is to regenerate the area through a range of social and economic programmes. It has an obligation to fully involve young people in its operation.

If possible try and relate this to a local situation e.g. a new youth club being set up. Ask if, how, when and why they were consulted and if not – how should they have been consulted?

Give out ***additional handout*** on the youth ladder of participation and ask for examples for each rung of the ladder.

Exercise 6 – Group Project (Planning)

Work through the exercise as normal.

Exercise 7 – Recap and Summary

Try to spend a bit more time than normal on this exercise to ensure key messages have been learned.

Exercise 5
WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T GET INVOLVED

Why young people don't get involved

- Work commitments
- School/college commitments
- Lack of trust
- Judgments/stereotypes of young people
- Territorialism
- Childcare responsibilities
- Feeling that the issue doesn't concern them
- Feeling that they aren't go along on their own
- Feeling that they might be asked to do more than they want
- A feeling that cliques would be running things
- Lack of information – poor marketing/publicity
- A feeling that decisions have already been made, so there is no point in attending
- Inappropriate venue(s)
- Transport
- Apathy – why should they get involved when such a small group can't do or change anything
- No spare time
- Poor health
- Social exclusion
- Powerlessness and low self-esteem
- Lack of confidence in 'the system'
- Lack of interest

Adapted from 'Building Healthy Communities' – a resource pack for multi-agency health improvement, North Cumbria Health Development Unit.

Exercise 5

Why young people want to be involved in issues that affect them?

- It offers them new skills
- It builds their self-esteem
- It challenges the sense of importance often associated with childhood
- It empowers them to tackle abuses and neglect of their rights
- They have a great deal they want to say
- They think that adults often get it wrong
- They feel their contribution could lead to better decisions
- They feel it is right to listen to them when it is an issue in their life
- They want to contribute to making the world a better place
- It can be fun
- It offers a chance to meet children and young people from different environments, of different ages and experience

Source: UNICEF: Promoting Children's participation in Democratic Decision Making 2001

Exercise 5

LADDER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

A ladder of participation, against which one can assess the effectiveness of children and young people's participation has been suggested. Different levels and forms of participation are appropriate to different situations. For example, some young people may not want, or not yet feel prepared, to take on responsibility for key decisions or where large numbers of young people are involved they may not all be able to participate to the same extent in the same way. The rungs of the ladder are shown below:

<p><u>Child/Youth initiated -Shared decisions with adults</u> Children/Young people have the ideas, set up the project and invite adults to join with them in making decisions. Young people take the lead role in developing ideas and proposals, identifying opportunities and problems and formulating strategies for action, the process being supported by adults</p>
<p><u>Child /Youth initiated and directed</u> Children/Young People have the idea and decide how they want to carry the project out. Adults are available but do not take charge. Young people take the lead in organising and directing collaborative working groups, supported by adults. Young people develop the confidence and skills to take control and responsibility.</p>
<p><u>Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people</u> Both adults and young people are involved in developing ideas, planning projects and decision making. The experience and knowledge of young people is valued and ways are developed for adults and young people to communicate and make joint decisions. Adults are willing to hand over some control to young people and provide a secure framework, support and direction</p>
<p><u>Consulted and Informed</u> Adults develop the initial idea but children are involved in each stage of the planning and implementation. A project is designed and run by adults but young people understand the process and their opinions are sought and treated seriously. Young people are not expected to reflect adult ideas and opinions but they are encouraged to develop their own ideas and understandings and helped to make informed judgements.</p>
<p><u>Assigned and Informed</u> Children are invited to take part in a project which adults have designed. Their views are taken seriously. Adults set up the framework and processes for a project and young people volunteer to participate when they have understood the intentions of the project, know who makes decisions and appreciate the nature of their fixed roles.</p>
<p><u>Tokenism</u> Children are asked their views but have little choice in how they express their views or how frank they can be. Adults organise situations where young people seem to be given a voice but in fact have little choice about the subject and limited opportunities to develop their own opinions or make decisions. Adults set the agenda and young people are expected to fall in line.</p>
<p><u>Decoration</u> Children take part- they may sing or dance, but have no real understanding or purpose Adults involve young people in promoting a cause which young people have a little understanding of have had little or no say in deciding about. The young people wear the t shirt with slogans, perform at an event to bolster the cause and often engage in fun, feel good factor activities. Young people are used to bolster a cause which adults think is important.</p>
<p><u>Manipulation</u> Children do or say what adults suggest and they have no real understanding of issues</p>

Young People are not given opportunities to understand the issues being addressed, are not actively involved in decision making and merely go along with what adults require of them without being a chance to contribute

Source: Russell (1998:81) drawing on Hart (1992) and Arnstein's (1969) typology of citizens control