

Module 8: Meeting Challenges/Creating Alternatives

The purpose of this final module is to assist the participants in using the skills they have learned (effective communication skills, conflict management, decision making, problem solving, and using social support) to address a challenge that the group faces. Following the activity, application to real life in terms of generating and considering ways in which they can take initiative in influencing their future opportunities and will be addressed.

POISON PEANUT BUTTER PIT

- Task Objectives: To promote the experience of working together to deal with a challenge that a group such as friends or family might face. To promote the development of creative alternatives when dealing with challenges.
- Materials: Masking Tape to mark the beginning and the end of the poison peanut butter pit. Three 3-foot long (1" thickness x 4" width) wooden planks. Number and length of planks will need to vary according to how many participants are in the group. All of the group members should be able to fit onto two planks when standing sideways
- Directions: Put tape on the floor to indicate the beginning of the poison peanut butter pit. The end of the pit is the wall at the far side of the room; the distance should be approximately 16-24 feet. Have participants get into teams of 5 people and 1-2 "coaches". Facilitator says the following: **"Your job is to get all of your team safely across the poison peanut butter pit. To do this, you have these 3 planks. While you are crossing the pit, all of the planks must be in contact with at least one person (this is rule #1). In contact means touching a person's hand or foot. If a plank is let go of and no one is touching it, it quickly sinks into the poison peanut butter pit. Rule # 2 is: No one can allow themselves to touch the poison peanut butter pit. If a person's hand, foot, or other body part touches the pit (i.e., the floor or any nearby structures) while you are crossing, the whole team has to start all over again. You must rely on each other to keep your balance and to make sure that all of the planks are in contact with at least one person. You must make sure that everyone on your team safely crosses the poison peanut butter pit (rule # 3).** If a team is having difficulty getting across after several tries, have them select one person to be the 'coach.' The coach is immune to the perils of the poison peanut butter pit and can walk beside the team provide guiding comments (but cannot touch any of the team members) as the team makes its way across the pit"

RULES

1. All of the planks must be in contact with at least one person.
2. No one can allow themselves to touch the poison peanut butter pit. If a person's hand, foot, or other body part touches the pit the whole team must start over. If your feet are fully on the board and your foot hangs over and touches the floor a little that is OK.

3. Everyone must make it safely across the pit for your team to succeed.

- Give each team two consecutive tries before moving to the next group. After all groups have tried to cross the pit, have any groups that have not succeeded try again. Emphasize the need to take their time and to work together to make sure everyone keeps their balance and all planks are being touched by someone.
- The job of the coaches is help the other members take their time, remember to keep in contact with all planks, work together, and problem solve.
- Use masking tape to mark how far a team gets with each of their turns.

Process Questions

- How did you manage to get your team across the poison peanut butter pit?
- What was the hardest part about trying to get across the pit?
- When you face a challenge in real life, how does slowing down and cooperating with other people help you deal with the problem?

Concluding Activity: *The WEB of Connection*

- Task Objectives: To offer recognition of student accomplishments and to reinforce the notion that the students can be a support system for one another to promote success.
- Materials: Ball of yarn

Directions: The lead facilitator says: **“This activity offers us an opportunity to recognize each others’ accomplishments. When you toss the ball of yarn to a person, first say the person’s name, and then tell him or her one thing you saw this person accomplish or do well while participating in this program. We are going to take turns recognizing each others’ accomplishments and strengths until everyone has had a turn. Before you toss the yarn ball to another person, make sure to wrap it around your wrist. We will take turns tossing the ball until everyone has received it once. Remember the person who tossed the ball to you.”** The lead facilitator wraps the yarn around his/her wrist, calls a person’s name, tosses the person the ball of yarn, and then tells the person one thing that person accomplished or did well. The process continues until everyone in the group receives the ball of yarn once. While the group is connected the facilitator points out **“We have all been in this program together, and, everyone has been an important part of the success of this program. Although the program is coming to an end, we can continue to apply what we’ve learned in our day-to-day lives. To untangle ourselves, the last person who received the yarn needs to unwrap it from his or her wrist, carefully toss it over to the person who threw it to her or him and say one thing he or she learned while participating in PAYD that she or he will continue to use now that our program is finished.”** This process continues until all people are free from the web. Those who are freed first can assist those still tangled (if needed). After all are free, the facilitator points out that we can continue to be positive people in each others’ lives by cooperating with one another to solve the problems and challenges we face.

Retrospective Pre/Post Evaluation

SPEND ANY REMAINING TIME WITH STUDENTS DISCUSSING WHAT THEY LIKED MOST ABOUT PAYD; THE KINDS OF THINGS THEY LEARNED, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW IT COULD BE IMPROVED. ONE OF THE FACILITATORS SHOULD TAKE NOTES ON THIS.

ENDING CELEBRATION. PERMIT 10-15 MINUTES AT THE END OF THE SESSION (AFTER COMPLETING THE EVALUATIONS) TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PARTICIPATION OF EACH STUDENT AND PROVIDING THE STUDENT WITH A TANGIBLE AWARD (E.G., RIBBON OR CERTIFICATE) THAT RECOGNIZES HIS OR HER SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PAYD. AS EACH STUDENT IS RECOGNIZED, THE GROUP SHOULD OFFER APPLAUSE.

Follow-up Activity to the PAYD program:

For this final module, one important addition would be to link the PAYD skills and knowledge to community activities in which teens can meet challenges and create alternatives. Some of these activities include:

1. Having high school age teens volunteer to do homework tutoring and other after school activities with elementary age children.
2. Involving high school age teens in the planning and implementation phases of 4-H programming for younger children.
3. Have cooperative extension work with teachers at the school to offer opportunities for teens to become civically engaged. Activities could include: helping to clean up trash in their community, helping to create a park or playground in their community, talking with local legislators about youth issues and needs in the community.
4. Having the teens write and act out a play that provides other teens in their school with messages of empowerment.
5. Having teens engage in creative challenges that express their creative thinking and goals for the future via art and writing projects. Students can create a mural, write poems or raps, or write short stories that depict teens' views about how they can make a positive difference in their own lives and others.
6. If available, take teens to challenge courses, sometimes called ropes initiative courses, that emphasize teamwork and problem solving skills.
7. Have teens do volunteer work where they help elderly members in the community with activities of daily living and recreation.
8. Engage students in a career "possible selves" activity. Have students respond to the attached list of items with regard to the extent to which ones are most like what they hope for in their future jobs. Have them identify the kinds of jobs that they think best fit the qualities they have selected. Then have them talk in small groups about how they plan to attain jobs (are there things they can do to "create opportunities" for these job possibilities); who can help them in the process. Also have the students consider whether they believe any obstacles exist for obtaining their desired goals, and how they might overcome these obstacles.

MODULE 8: MEETING CHALLENGES/CREATING ALTERNATIVES

County _____ **School** _____ **Code** _____
 (completed by facilitator)

Grade in school _____ **Age** _____ **Circle one: male female**

Race/Ethnicity: **Black/African American** **White/Caucasian** **Hispanic/Latino**
Native American **Asian American** **Other** _____

Please indicate how much you enjoyed the activities.

	Not At All	A little	Some	A lot
1. I enjoyed Poison Peanut Butter Pit activity.	1	2	3	4
2. I enjoyed the WEB of Connection.	1	2	3	4

Please indicate what you knew before and after participating in this session.

	Before this session				After this session			
	Not At All	A little	Some	A lot	Not At All	A little	Some	A lot
I knew how to slow down and think when I face difficult challenges.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to use my support system when I face difficult challenges.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew of ways to make my future the best it can be.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I could name some of my strengths and accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew how to apply my strengths in order to create positive alternatives for myself and others.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4