

The Skill Building Blocks



Personal Mindset

Humans are intuitively curious and motivated to take action to pursue their interests and ideas. As young people develop and their interests change, their motivations may also ebb and flow. Through interactions with others and their own decisions, young people gain **confidence** in themselves as capable actors in the world. As they continue to challenge themselves, young people learn to **cope with disappointment, to rebound from failure, to set themselves up for success and to persevere** despite setbacks or difficulty. Their belief in themselves as learners enables them to **take initiative** in their own learning process.



Planning for Success

“Planning is choice with intention. **Youth begin with a specific goal** or purpose in mind that results in the choice. Planning involves **deciding on actions, predicting interactions, recognizing problems and proposing solutions, and anticipating consequences and reactions**. Reflection is remembering with analysis. **Reflection** occurs at the end of a planned activity as a means of reviewing that activity, the feelings, learning and changes associated with it, and as a way to potentially plan for future encounters with the same subject. In an engaged learning environment, reflection can often lead to new ideas or planning for future activities.” (Ramaswamy, McGovern, Akiva, & Okasinski, 2012)



Social Awareness

People are social beings. We rely on each other to develop personal and community identity as well as build skills and resources. As youth grow, they begin to test their **social skills in relation to others**, learning how their actions impact those around them. They begin to **understand the “give and take” process that builds constructive and supportive relationships**. As they explore beyond their home setting, youth are often challenged to evolve their skills and behaviors to navigate in new contexts, learning new norms and patterns of behavior.



Verbal Communication

Our ability to effectively communicate, both verbally and non-verbally can be used to inform others of our needs or to impart knowledge. **Verbal communication encompasses any form of communication involving words – spoken, written or signed**. As young people have more varied experiences, they learn the communication styles of different groups, and learn **to use the appropriate communication style for their message to be best received**.



Collaboration

Skills for teamwork and collaboration – **working constructively and cooperatively with others** – shouldn’t be undervalued. These skills are gaining importance in and outside of the workplace. Staff promote a welcoming atmosphere where young people feel comfortable and accepted. Staff monitor group dynamics to ensure that no one is left out and that attention is paid to issues of power and control, youth comfort levels with activities and peers, experiences of new group members in particular, and to group stage development. By bringing attention to these details of group dynamics, youth are made aware of typical group interaction patterns and expected behaviors. They develop, through practice and feedback, **skills for developing relationships with peers and for respectful collaboration**.



Problem Solving

Identifying problems and finding solutions requires a process, whether the problem elicits a straightforward and predictable solution or is an emotionally wrought decision. Those who are fluent in problem solving are able to navigate the process efficiently, selecting methods that correspond to the problem at hand.