Materials

1. PowerPoint slides or posters of:
   - Essential Elements of 4-H
   - Essential Elements: Belonging
   - Essential Elements: Mastery
   - Essential Elements: Generosity
   - Essential Elements: Independence
   - Meeting Youth Needs in Positive Ways
   - Meeting Youth Needs in Negative Ways
   - Unmet Needs
2. Flip chart paper
3. Markers
4. Copies of Appendix, Lesson 2 handouts if participants are not receiving 4-H 101 curriculum

Objectives

1. Describe the four Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development
2. State the consequences of meeting the needs of youth in positive or negative ways
3. Practice developing positive youth characteristics based on the Essential Elements

Time

1 hour 15 minutes

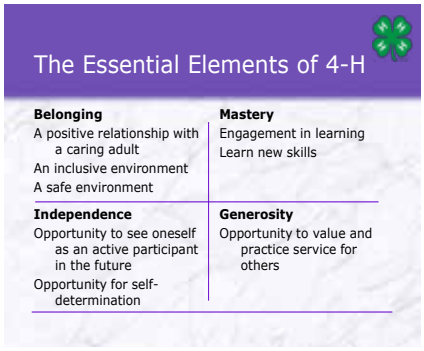
Lesson 2

The Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

4-H PRKC: Youth Development (domain): Youth Development Theory; Growth and Development (topics)

WHAT TO DO

Show Power Point slide or poster of Essential Elements of 4-H.



WHAT TO SAY

Because 4-H is the youth development outreach arm of all land-grant universities, youth development professionals are responsible for knowing and applying the most current and valid research available to their work.

Before we begin to examine how to establish 4-H clubs or groups, we need to look at the research framework that supports youth development programming.

Ask yourselves this question: What if no youth development programs existed? If we were to develop one using the latest research that would assist young people in becoming healthy, problem-solving, constructive adults, what would it look like?

The answer: It would look a lot like 4-H. Using the Essential Elements of 4-H, we create opportunities and environments that meet young people's needs and build life skills.

Although each 4-H club or program is different, the four Essential Elements are common to all.

The four Essential Elements are Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. Let's look at what the Essential Elements mean in relation to how 4-H structures its youth development programming.

WHAT TO DO

WHAT TO SAY

Belonging
- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- An inclusive environment
- A safe environment

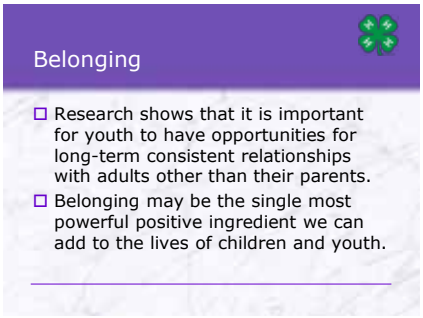
Mastery
- Engagement in learning
- Learn new skills

Independence
- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunity for self-determination

Generosity
- Opportunity to value and practice service for others

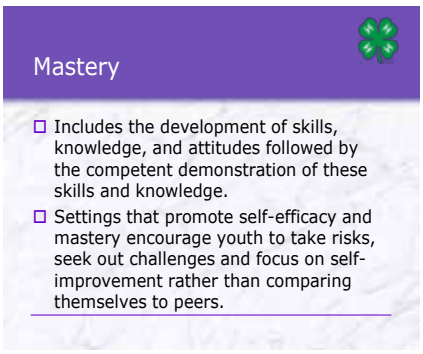
Let's examine the importance of each element more closely.

Show Power Point slide or poster of Essential Elements: Belonging.



Belonging. Youth need to know they are cared about and accepted by others. They also need to experience a sense of physical and emotional safety and to feel a sense of connection to others in the group. Research shows that it is important for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than their parents. Research also suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add to the lives of children and youth.

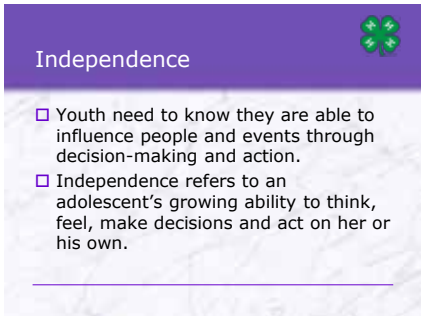
Show Power Point slide or poster of Essential Elements: Mastery.



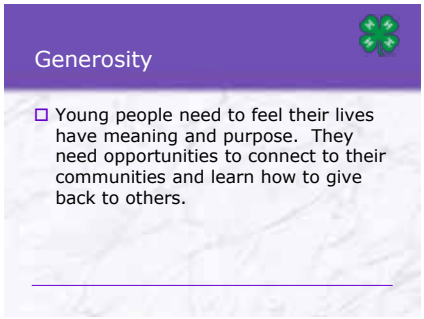
Mastery includes the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes followed by the competent demonstration of these skills and knowledge. In order to develop self-confidence and a sense that they matter, young people need to feel like they are capable. Mastery is sometimes called self-efficacy. Settings that promote self-efficacy and mastery encourage youth to take risks, seek out challenges and focus on self-improvement rather than comparing themselves to peers.

WHAT TO DO

Show Power Point slide or poster of Essential Elements: Independence.



Show Power Point slide or poster of Essential Elements: Generosity.



Divide participants into four groups. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and three different colored markers. Ask each group to draw a body outline on their flip chart paper and "create a youth" with a name, age, gender, hobbies, etc. Assign each group one of the four essential elements: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, or Generosity. Ask each group to list characteristics that their youth might develop if his/her needs are met in positive ways. For example, if a group is assigned Independence, some of the positive characteristics one might expect include responsibility, self-discipline, leadership, etc.

After 5 minutes ask each group to report their responses back to the larger group.

WHAT TO SAY

Independence. Youth need to know they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. Independence refers to an adolescent's growing ability to think, feel, make decisions and act on her or his own. By gaining a sense of independence, youth develop personal responsibility and discipline.

Generosity. Young people need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. They need opportunities to connect to their communities and learn how to give back to others. As part of this process, they gain an understanding of others' needs and learn how to respond to these needs. Generosity may also include the development of values such as compassion and tolerance for diversity.

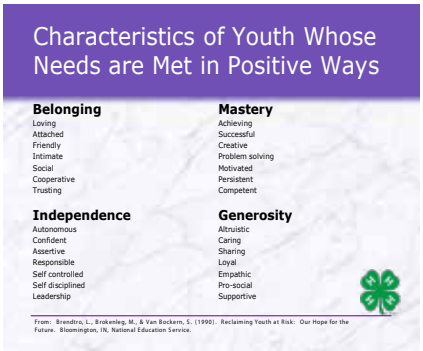
Why is meeting youths' needs so important? What happens to youth if their needs are met in positive ways? Met in negative ways? Unmet?

In your group, let's spend five minutes coming up with positive characteristics for your youth that relate to the essential element you've been assigned. In other words, if your youth's needs are met in positive ways, list some of the characteristics you might expect him/her to exhibit.

Now, I'd like each group to share the list of characteristics your group developed.

WHAT TO DO

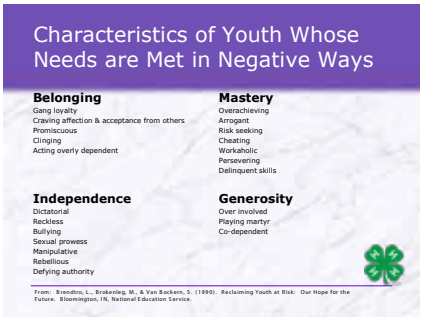
After all groups have reported, show the Power Point slide or poster of Characteristics of Youth Whose Needs are Met in Positive Ways.



Ask each group to list characteristics for their assigned element that their youth might develop if needs are met in negative ways.

After 5 minutes ask each group to report back to the larger group.

After all groups have reported, show the PowerPoint slide or poster of Characteristics of Youth Whose Needs are Met in Negative Ways.



Ask each group to list characteristics for their assigned element that their youth might develop if needs go unmet.

After 5 minutes ask each group to report back to the larger group.

WHAT TO SAY

When youth have their needs met in positive ways, like through participation in 4-H, they develop characteristics such as those listed here that are valued by society.

When youth feel welcomed at a 4-H Club meeting, they are more attached and friendly (Belonging). When they are able to learn skills to successfully complete a project, they achieve a level of Mastery. Providing opportunities for the youth to self-select the goals they wish to achieve provides them with Independence. And, youth develop caring and sharing characteristics (Generosity) when they work as a team to participate in projects that serve the community through 4-H.

In your group, let's take another five minutes and list characteristics related to your assigned essential element that we might expect your youth to develop if his/her needs are met in negative ways.

Now, I'd like each group to share the list of characteristics your group developed.

When youth have their needs met in negative ways, they may develop some of these characteristics we see listed here that are not valued by society and indeed can be harmful to young people and those around them.

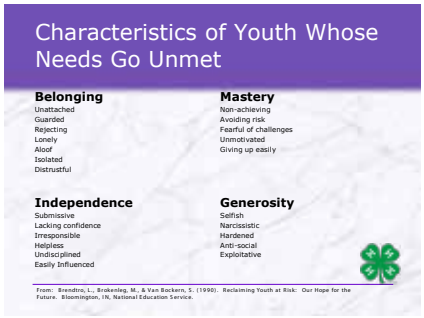
Youth who do not have a safe environment such as a 4-H Club to belong to may seek negative ways to find that acceptance elsewhere, such as with gang involvement. Those who exhibit bullying or rebellious behavior may be seeking independence in a negative way.

Finally, I want each group to spend five minutes listing characteristics for youth whose needs go unmet.

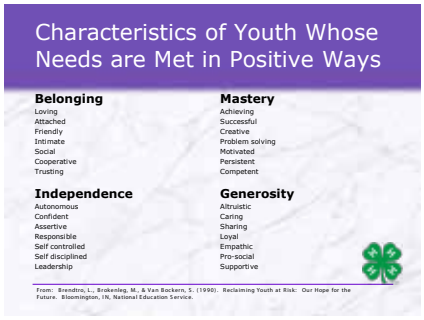
Now, I'd like each group to share the list of characteristics your group developed.

WHAT TO DO

After all groups have reported, show the Power Point slide or poster of Characteristics of Youth Whose Needs Go Unmet.



Again, show the Power Point slide or poster of Characteristics of Youth Whose Needs are Met in Positive Ways.



Allow about 10-15 minutes for each group to come up with strategies that would develop positive characteristics in their 4-H Club for all youth. Ask each group to take two characteristics from two different Essential Elements for discussion. For example: leadership under Independence and cooperation under Belonging.

After 15 minutes ask each group to share their strategies that help to develop positive youth characteristics.

WHAT TO SAY

Again, you can see when youths' needs go unmet, they may develop undesirable characteristics.

Those youth who have no attachment to other people feel rejected and lonely; they lack the Belonging characteristic. Without Mastery, youth will avoid risk and be fearful of challenges. If they lack Independence, they often lack confidence and may be easily influenced. Those who have not had the opportunity to experience Generosity are seen as selfish and perhaps anti-social.

As we consider the ways that youth needs are met or unmet, the importance of youth participation in a positive youth development program such as 4-H is clear!

Next, I want each group to take two positive characteristics from the lists of two different Essential Elements (belonging, mastery, independence, generosity) and brainstorm a way that your 4-H club might develop that characteristic in all young people. For example, using the leadership characteristic, which falls under Independence, you might suggest that the adults in your 4-H club let the youth plan and make the decisions that affect their 4-H club.

Let's hear your ideas for building positive characteristics in youth through your 4-H club.

We will talk more about developing a 4-H club later, but please note that 4-H National Headquarters has developed a program planning tool that can help you build the 4-H Essential Elements into your program. This tool identifies your program's assets and can suggest resources to help you strengthen weak areas.

Information on where to access the Essential Elements Program Planning Tool is included in the Appendix.

REFERENCES

Kress, C. Essential Elements of Youth Development. Retrieved July 20, 2010 from *http//:www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_presents.htm.*

McKinley, S. and Broady, C. 2010. Characteristics of Positive Youth Development and Life Skills Development Lesson Plan. Purdue University Cooperative Extension.

Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. 1990. Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future. Bloomington, IN. National Education Service.