



READY TO GO: Volunteer Training Toolkit





**READY TO GO:
VOLUNTEER TRAINING TOOLKIT**

Introduction



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Produced by ANR Communications & Marketing and the MSU Extension Educational Materials Team.

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- ▶ Eaton County STOMP 4-H Youth Mentoring
- ▶ Grand Rapids Public Schools
- ▶ Henry Ford Community College
- ▶ The HOPE Mentoring Program at Midland/Isabella Department of Human Services
- ▶ Kentwood Public Schools
- ▶ Luce County 4-H Peer Mentoring
- ▶ Macomb County 4-H Mentoring
- ▶ Mars Hill KidsHOPE USA
- ▶ Montmorency County 4-H Youth Mentoring
- ▶ Mt. Olive Baptist Church
- ▶ Muskegon County Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring
- ▶ Orchards Children Services
- ▶ Ottawa County 4-H Tech Wizards
- ▶ Ottawa County Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring
- ▶ Wayne County 4-H Tech Wizards
- ▶ Wayne County 4-H Youth Mentoring

Preface

In 2012, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension published *Ready to Go: Mentor Training Toolkit* in response to a lack of hands-on curriculum to train youth mentors. The evidence-based and customizable curriculum was designed to meet the needs of a variety of mentoring program models and objectives. Written and piloted by a team of MSU Extension professionals and our partners at community agencies, the first edition was written to support mentoring professionals who trained volunteer mentors. An expert panel reviewed the curriculum for content and design in 2012 to ensure that the product reflected research and best practices in the mentoring field.

Ready to Go was embraced by the mentoring community and 4-H. The curriculum was featured in workshops and keynotes at multiple national and international conferences including the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff (Portland, Oregon, 2015; Orlando, Florida, 2012); the National Mentoring Summit (Washington D.C., 2014); 4-H National Mentoring Grantee Training (Chevy Chase, Maryland, 2014, 2015, 2017); International Mentoring Conference (Cancun, Mexico, 2015); the Long Island Mentoring Partnership Conference (New York, 2015); The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (2014); Annual Peraj Mexico National Conference (Villahermosa, Mexico, 2014); Extension Galaxy Conference (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 2013); and the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism (Frankenmuth, Michigan, 2013). The National 4-H Council began selling the curriculum in 2013 after a successful peer review. The National Mentoring Resource Center also conducted a review and features the curriculum as a resource for practitioners. In 2015, four modules of the curriculum were translated into Spanish through a partnership with Peraj Mexico, a mentoring program that matches college student mentors with youth throughout the country.

Early on, it became clear that the curriculum was having a much wider reach than the mentoring organizations and that many volunteer-based organizations were also finding and using the training activities. In 2016, a group of MSU Extension professionals came together to revise and update *Ready to Go* to reach a broader audience of volunteers. Feedback from users informed updates, additional activities were added and some activities were removed. We worked with Partners for Youth With Disabilities to ensure that all activities are inclusive in the new edition. Through the revision in 2017–2019, pilots and peer reviews were again conducted on all new activities and any activities that had significant edits. In addition, the name of the curriculum has been changed to *Ready to Go: Volunteer Training Toolkit* to reflect the new focus.

We are excited to publish the second edition in 2020 and hope this curriculum will meet the needs of professionals who train volunteers who work with young people.

Lisa Bottomley & Christine Heverly

Project Directors, Ready to Go: Volunteer Training Toolkit



How to Use This Curriculum

Welcome to *Ready to Go: Volunteer Training Toolkit*, developed by Michigan State University Extension Children and Youth Institute. This curriculum assists volunteer programs in the training of new and existing volunteers with a highly customizable menu of training activities that can be used to tailor trainings to the specific needs of the program.

Volunteer programs may use the activities to train volunteers in programs and settings with adult or youth volunteers. Designed to be flexible, the activities often suggest variations on use with special populations or in certain settings.

Research recommends a minimum of 2 hours and ideally 6 or more hours of pre-training (Rhodes, 2002; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). To determine the length of the training programs, develop a list of skills volunteers will need to succeed in your program. Sometimes programs screen potential volunteers to ensure they possess some of these skills. The final training should include activities that build the needed skills that are not prerequisites for volunteers.

Modules in this curriculum offer a broad scope of training activities to give volunteers the skills needed to succeed. Each activity gives training facilitators the tools needed to successfully carry out their trainings without the need for supplemental research. All modules include a background section that briefs trainers on the basics of the subject covered in that module as well as details about the activities in the module. After reading through the background section for a module, facilitators will want to select the activities from that module that best serve the needs of their training group.



Ready To Go: Volunteer Training Toolkit

Activity Outlines



Activities follow the following format:

DESCRIPTION:

The description gives a brief summary of the activity.

OBJECTIVES:

A bulleted list of concrete items outlines what the participants will learn by participating in the activity. Objectives may also include learning how to use tools provided in an activity to support issues such as goal planning or problem solving in their relationships.

MATERIALS:

All activities contain a list of items a training facilitator will need to successfully use the activity to train volunteers. You may accomplish many activities by substituting similar materials if you can't find those specifically listed in this section. This section will also list handouts needed for the activity.

TIME:

The time listed is the approximate length of time the activity should take if done in full. You can shorten or lengthen many activities depending on the amount of time you need for your group to discuss and process each activity.

SETTING:

Each section provides a suggested location for which this activity is best suited such as a room with tables and chairs for volunteers to work at or an open space volunteers can easily move around.

AUDIENCE:

This section lists the intended audience as some activities focus on adult volunteers, others aim to reach youth volunteers and still others involve both.

PROCEDURE:

Before the activity:

This section lists preparations needed to best carry out the activity, beginning with reading the related background section. It will also list tips for arranging the presentation room, preparing any flip chart paper or other visual aids for the training, copying and distributing handouts, and placing basic supplies in the most efficient location for distribution and use during the activity.

During the activity:

Numbered sections in this “During the Activity” segment guide training facilitators through the activity. Each section is broken down into instructions in plain type for the facilitator and bolded and italicized sections he or she reads aloud or paraphrases. Instructions on when to distribute handouts and other materials or when to pause for questions or responses are in plain type and interspersed within the script.

Activities guide participants in the training step by step to an understanding of the concepts introduced or expanded in the training activities. The steps involve hands-on learning. Instead of learning from a facilitator’s lecture, participants learn from conversations and thought processes that contribute to the process of self-discovery of the concepts. The “During the Activity” section is highly detailed to allow first-time training facilitators to confidently tackle training on concepts they may find advanced.

PROCESSING:

Discussion questions:

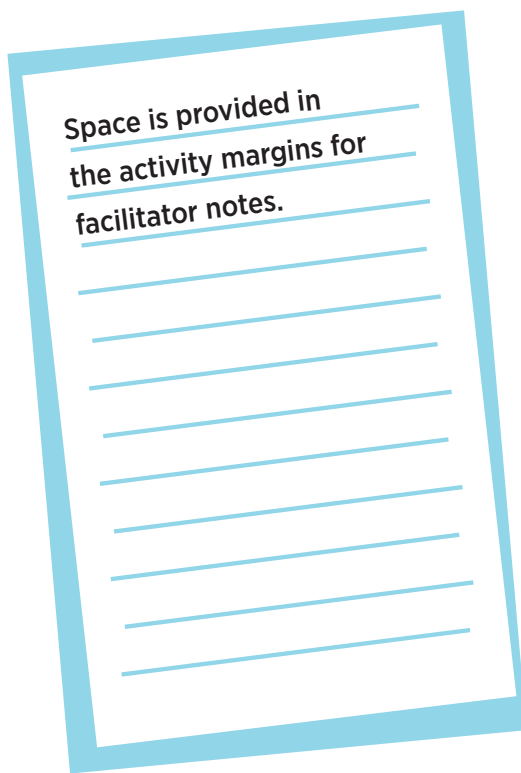
Training facilitators may want to ask participants these suggested questions to generate discussion and to create opportunities for reflection on the activity and related concepts. The questions may also provide opportunities to think beyond the concepts and apply them to other situations.

Key points:

Facilitators will want to bring these main points up in the discussions as well as use this additional information to highlight important concepts and situations. Key points may also expand on the information presented in the activity, giving those involved in the training the opportunity to think beyond the basic understanding of the principles presented.

VARIATIONS:

Variations include adaptations of the activity concerning constraints on time, the needs of special populations, or different volunteer program types and training situations. This section may also describe alternate activity arrangements or ways to adapt the training activity in certain situations as discovered through the initial piloting of the activity.



MODULES AND ACTIVITIES

Facilitators need not present the activities in the order they appear in this curriculum. Activities are grouped by subject in modules. Module subject headings include “Building the Relationship,” “Setting Boundaries,” “Communication,” “Youth Development” and “Cultural Competency.” Each module contains a variety of activities to allow programs to choose activities that best serve their needs according to their youth and volunteer population.

Activities in the “Building the Relationship” module focus on defining the role of a volunteer. They prepare volunteers for the task of connecting with young people and planning activities with them to meet needs.

The “Setting Boundaries” module discusses the appropriate boundaries between volunteers and youth. It explores the importance of these boundaries, including boundaries set by programs and by the families of youth, in keeping both volunteers and youth safe in relationships. Activities also touch on how to recognize when boundaries are crossed and what to do in those instances.

The “Communication” module introduces volunteers to basic communication skills as well as tools to allow volunteers to more smoothly communicate with youth and their families from differing backgrounds. This section also includes activities that teach problem solving skills, goal setting and teamwork.

The “Youth Development” module introduces volunteers to the various issues important to young people and communicates how young people develop their skills. Though these skills may not always be academic and adults at school or home may not value them, they still are important to a young person. These in-depth activities tackle subjects such as, exploring youth interests, cultivating safe spaces for youth and thinking through decision making in an age-appropriate way.

“Cultural Competency” training activities touch on issues of difference by helping volunteers to acknowledge and appreciate the various backgrounds they may encounter during volunteering. This section also introduces volunteers to ways to interact with people different from themselves. It encourages volunteers to celebrate differences and acknowledge how differences can be a learning opportunity for both volunteer and youth.

REFERENCES:

- DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C. & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(2), 157-197.
- Rhodes, J. E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sample Training Menus



Sample training menus to use when planning volunteer training for specific program models and audiences follow. We recommend that programs hold two or more sessions for training when the training length is more than two hours for youth volunteers or more than three hours for adult volunteers. Each menu includes extra time for introductions and setting ground rules.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER TRAINING MENUS:

TIME: 2 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Sweet as Candy	Building the Relationship	10 minutes
A Volunteer Is, A Volunteer Is Not	Building the Relationship	20 minutes
Cross the Line	Setting Boundaries	20 minutes
Unseen Artists	Communication	30 minutes
Unbreakable	Youth Development	30 minutes

TIME: 4 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Sweet as Candy	Building the Relationship	10 minutes
A Volunteer Is, A Volunteer Is Not	Building the Relationship	20 minutes
Cross the Line	Setting Boundaries	20 minutes
Unseen Artists	Communication	30 minutes
The Right Stuff	Communication	15 minutes
Cultural Tossup	Cultural Competency	15 minutes
Unbreakable	Youth Development	30 minutes
Peer Pressure Blowup	Youth Development	25 minutes
What Piece Are You?	Building the Relationship	45 minutes
Positive Me	Youth Development	20 minutes

ADULT VOLUNTEER TRAINING MENUS:

AUDIENCE: Site-based, adult volunteers

TIME: 3 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Volunteers Are Like . . .	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Cross the Line	Setting Boundaries	20 minutes
Rules: What Good Are They?	Setting Boundaries	30 minutes
Pipe Dreams	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
What's It Like to Be a Young Person?	Youth Development	15 minutes
Risky Business	Youth Development	30 minutes

AUDIENCE: Site-based, adult volunteers

TIME: 6 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Sweet as Candy	Building the Relationship	15 minutes
Web of Influence	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Volunteers Are Like . . .	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Cross the Line	Setting Boundaries	20 minutes
Rules: What Good Are They?	Setting Boundaries	30 minutes
Pipe Dreams	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
What's It Like to Be a Young Person?	Youth Development	15 minutes
Risky Business	Youth Development	30 minutes
Cultural Tossup	Cultural Competency	15 minutes
Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg	Cultural Competency	25 minutes
Meet My Generation	Cultural Competency	60 minutes

AUDIENCE: Community-based, adult volunteers

TIME: 3 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Volunteers Are Like . . .	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Relationships: Where Do They Stand?	Setting Boundaries	15 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Setting Boundaries	40 minutes
Draw Me for Your Leader or I FeelWhenBecause	Communication	15 minutes
What's It Like to Be a Young Person?	Youth Development	20 minutes
Understanding Adulthood: Building Positive Youth-Adult Relationships	Youth Development	45 minutes

AUDIENCE: Community-based, adult volunteers

TIME: 6 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Web of Influence	Building the Relationship	40 minutes
Mentors Are Like . . .	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Reality Check	Building the Relationship	40 minutes
Activity Planning Tools	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Relationships: Where Do They Stand?	Setting Boundaries	15 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Setting Boundaries	40 minutes
Draw Me for Your Leader	Communication	15 minutes
I FeelWhenBecause	Communication	20 minutes
What's It Like to Be a Young Person?	Youth Development	20 minutes
Understanding Adulthood: Building Positive Youth-Adult Relationships	Youth Development	45 minutes
What Do You Value?	Cultural Competency	45 minutes



AUDIENCE: Community-based, adult volunteers

TIME: 9 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Web of Influence	Building the Relationship	40 minutes
Volunteers Are Like . . .	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Activity Planning Tools	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
What Piece Are You?	Building the Relationship	45 minutes
Relationships: Where Do They Stand?	Setting Boundaries	15 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Setting Boundaries	40 minutes
Draw Me for Your Leader	Communication	15 minutes
I FeelWhenBecause	Communication	20 minutes
The Right Stuff	Communication	20 minutes
What's It Like to Be a Young Person?	Youth Development	20 minutes
Understanding Adulthood: Building Positive Youth-Adult Relationship	Youth Development	45 minutes
Building a Developmental Assets® Toolbox	Youth Development	45 minutes
What Do You Value?	Cultural Competency	45 minutes
Golden Ticket	Cultural Competency	45 minutes

AUDIENCE: Group settings, adult volunteers

TIME: 3 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Soap and Sugar Adults	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Tag Team Building	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Setting Boundaries	40 minutes
People Power	Communication	20 minutes
Take Your Best Shot	Communication	20 minutes
Unbreakable	Youth Development	30 minutes

AUDIENCE: Group settings, adult volunteers

TIME: 6 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Soap and Sugar Adults	Building the Relationship	20 minutes
Tag Team Building	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Boundaries	45 minutes
People Power	Communication	15 minutes
Take Your Best Shot	Communication	15 minutes
Silent Exchanges	Communication	40 minutes
Unbreakable	Youth Development	30 minutes
Learning by Doing	Youth Development	30 minutes
Unmasking Life Skills	Youth Development	30 minutes
What Piece Are You?	Building the Relationship	35 minutes
Stand for Your Values	Cultural Competency	20 minutes
Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg	Cultural Competency	25 minutes

AUDIENCE: Group setting, adult volunteers

TIME: 9 hours

ACTIVITY	MODULE	TIME
Soap and Sugar Adults	Building the Relationship	20 minutes
Tag Team Building	Building the Relationship	30 minutes
Rules: What Good Are They? or This Is a Test	Setting Boundaries	40 minutes
Boundaries Brainstorm	Setting Boundaries	45 minutes
People Power	Communication	20 minutes
Four Steps to Good Listening	Communication	20 minutes
Take Your Best Shot	Communication	20 minutes
Silent Exchanges	Communication	35 minutes
Unbreakable	Youth Development	30 minutes
Learning by Doing	Youth Development	30 minutes
Unmasking Life Skills	Youth Development	30 minutes
Lead In Style: Structure Building	Youth Development	40 minutes
What's in a Name?	Cultural Competency	20 minutes
Stand for Your Values	Cultural Competency	25 minutes
Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg	Cultural Competency	25 minutes
Meet My Generation	Cultural Competency	65 minutes

PLANNING HANDOUT:



Volunteer Training Checklist

Use this checklist as a guide for planning volunteer training sessions. Add sheets as necessary.

2 TO 4 WEEKS BEFORE TRAINING

Date(s): _____ Location: _____

Make room and space reservations. Reservations made by _____ on _____

Confirm presenters, including paid and volunteer staff and outside presenters.

○ Presenter 1: _____

○ Presenter 2: _____

○ Presenter 3: _____

Identify presenter needs for equipment such as computers, screens and flip charts.

○ Presenter 1 contacted by: _____ on _____

▶ Item 1: _____

▶ Item 2: _____

▶ Item 3: _____

○ Presenter 2 contacted by: _____ on _____

▶ Item 1: _____

▶ Item 2: _____

▶ Item 3: _____

○ Presenter 3 contacted by: _____ on _____

▶ Item 1: _____

▶ Item 2: _____

▶ Item 3: _____

Send mail or email confirmation to participants including the following:

○ Date

○ Time

○ Location

PLANNING HANDOUT (CONTINUED):

- Directions
- Parking
- Participant expectations (forms or anything else to bring to the event)
- Meal or snacks provided
- RSVP contact name, number and email address
- RSVP deadline date
- Who to contact with questions

Date first participant notification sent _____. Notified by _____

Signup sheet created and posted

2 WEEKS BEFORE TRAINING

Inventory training and meal or snack supplies.

Order additional supplies, if needed.

Print handouts and manuals.

Check in with presenters about last-minute needs. If they request additional handouts, arrange to make copies.

1 WEEK BEFORE TRAINING

Arrange for food and food supplies.

Person who will bring or arrange for food delivery: _____

Menu (consider the needs of vegetarians, people with food allergies and others with special dietary needs)

Disposable napkins, utensils, cups, plates

Beverages

Serving dishes and utensils (including an ice bowl, if necessary)

Ice

Contact participants who haven't registered by phone. Contacts made by _____ on _____.

Confirm room and room set up. Confirmation made by _____ on _____.

Confirm presenters, including:

Day, date and time of event

Directions to event site

Technical needs

PLANNING HANDOUT (CONTINUED):

- Room layout
- Agenda
- Time for any program needs and housekeeping details
- Number of registered participants
- Other important information (registrants with special needs, space limitations, group dynamics, etc.)
- Gather supplies, including:
 - Name tags
 - Markers
 - Masking tape
 - Pens or pencils
 - Flip charts, newsprint or other large paper
 - Easels (optional, if newsprint sheets can be taped to walls)
 - Writing paper
 - Training manuals
 - Paperwork (if needed)
 - Sign-in sheets
 - Directional signs to meeting building and room
- Meet with event staff to clarify expectations and responsibilities.

DAY OF TRAINING

- Ensure that the meeting room is clearly marked or signs directing participants to it are posted.
- Make sure the meeting room is unlocked.
- Confirm delivery of meals, snacks and beverages, if needed.
- Set up the registration table.
- Set up for any meals or snacks being served.
- Check technical equipment.



PLANNING HANDOUT:

Steps for Creating an Inclusive Training Space Checklist



Preparation prior to the start of an activity can help ensure that everyone can participate fully. Use this checklist to help create an inclusive place for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

- Evaluate the layout of the room. Will it work for everyone?
 - Make sure that there are a couple of spaces at tables where a wheelchair can fit. This may mean removing some chairs.
 - Move around the room. Is there adequate space for people to move throughout the room? Ensure there are no trip hazards, such as cords or loose flooring.
 - Where are the restrooms? Do they have automatic doors or manual doors? Make an announcement before the beginning of the activities to share this information.
 - Leave the door open prior to the start of the activities.
 - Identify a quiet area away from the group (perhaps even a separate room) in case someone should need it during the day. Announce the availability of that space at the beginning of the session.
- Bring supplies that work well for all.
 - If you are using supplies such as scissors, staplers or other items, invest in an adaptive version of each.
 - Use high contrast when creating visuals (for example, black marker on white paper).
 - Consider bringing cost-effective “fidgets,” such as pipe cleaners or playdough, which can help individuals release energy and stay on task.
 - If you are offering food, consider dietary restrictions. Be sure everything is labeled.
 - On hand-outs, use basic and simple fonts without flourishes, such as Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica and Calibri.
- Use Universal Design for Learning Guidelines.
 - Provide instructions in multiple ways, including visual and auditory.
 - Demonstrate and show examples as often as possible.
 - Use movement during an activity or between activities.
 - Reduce distractions as much as possible.
 - Allow participants to share responses in multiple ways, such as verbally, in writing or through drawing.
 - Provide verbal and written cues leading up to an activity transition.
 - Allow adequate time for breaks.

The ideas in the “Use Universal Design for Learning Guidelines” section are based on the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines created by CAST. Retrieved from CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2 at <http://udlguidelines.cast.org/>.

