

# What do you need to do to plan, prepare and deliver activities?

The basics are in place, you have a group of young people ready and raring to go - what are you going to do with them on a weekly basis? You want to make sure the activities are varied, safe, fun, informative and doable. Good planning is invaluable as it supports effective delivery and stops you from taking any risky actions. This section looks at what you need to do to ensure safe and fun delivery of activities in your group.

- Benefits of planning
- Regular activities
- Empowering Young People to deliver activities
- Managing when things go wrong
- Checklist



# Planning Activities - What difference does planning make?

## Summary

If you want young people to stay engaged and wanting to come to your group, it is essential to offer activities that are varied, fun, challenging and age appropriate. Each session needs to offer more than one type of activity and whilst you may have some regular favourite activities, it is also good to include other activities on a more infrequent basis.

Planning activities allows you to cater, as much as is possible, with the various needs and preferences of a diverse group of young people. It also solves the weekly problem of just turning up and hoping all goes well.

## Things to do/consider

- How far in advance you want to plan - will you do it monthly, termly or something different?
- What age are you aiming the group at - are the activities appropriate to their age and possible interests?
- The needs of all the young people attending or wanting to attend when choosing activities - can everyone take part, will you need to make some changes or will you need to provide extra support?
- What adults do you have available, will this be enough for all the activities you want to complete in one session? Do some activities require more supervision than others?
- Being flexible - sometimes no matter how much you plan an activity, it just doesn't work at that point in time. It doesn't mean it won't ever work but have a back-up plan just in case.
- What activities can be put on weekly with minimum effort and become 'regulars'.
- Be aware of the traditional conflict points for youth groups - football, pool tables and ping-pong tables. Young people may argue over these, for instance if someone is accused of cheating or of 'hogging' the table.
- Finding out the skills and interests that both the young people and volunteers have - would they be interested in running something different based on their own hobbies?
- Utilising the local community - what happens locally, can you get a different section of the community in to try something different e.g. knitting with the older generation, or learning to play traditional card games such as 'Crib'. You may be surprised at the outcome.
- What events are happening that can provide a theme e.g. Christmas or 'Movember'?
- Is the activity accessible to everyone in the group or can you adapt it so that everyone can join in?

## Principles

- Planning is the first stage in safeguarding and risk assessment - if you know what you are going to do, you can plan for possible risks.
- Having planned activities means young people are less likely to 'mooch' - if you don't have anything for young people to do, they become bored and find things to do. This may not be the constructive, positive activities we wish for our young people and potentially you will have to deal with more disruptive behaviour.
- Knowing what you are going to do means you arrive prepared with the right equipment.
- Planning allows young people and volunteers to know what is happening, this means everyone is prepared to participate.
- Good planning includes the involvement of young people.
- Structured sessions are easier to run as everyone knows what they are expected to do and when.
- Evaluation - knowing what works is an important part of planning.
- Always check your insurance covers the activities you plan to do.

**"It's important to plan activities in advance so that young people can have confidence in you. They need to know you know what you're doing, not rushing around or having long gaps between activities. Also, knowing in advance what activities are planned can encourage young people to come along."**

Summer, 17

## Useful links



- Momentum has compiled an 'Activity Kit' which gives instructions on various types of activities from icebreakers to running sessions on issues such as positive relationships.
- Momentum also runs various training courses that can help, a good place to start is the Momentum Training Hub - <http://www.momentumnorfolk.org.uk/our-services/the-training-hub/courselist.asp> which offers a great range of courses including an 'Introduction to Working with Young People' and a Level Two Award in 'Youth Work' Practice.

# Regular Activities - What do these look like?

## Summary

Regular activities can help set behaviour expectations, reinforce the rules, give your group an identity and provide lots of fun if they are managed correctly. They are the foundation for your group, and good regular activities mean young people keep coming back to the group. However, if they are not managed well, they can provide the backdrop for boredom and disruption.

What does regular activities mean? Well, it is anything you put on, on a regular basis. It could be that you always start with the same icebreaker to get everyone in the right frame of mind for the session, it could be that you always have a game of football going somewhere, or you always have a corner where young people can go and chill, and talk. It could be that the session always follows the same sort of format but with different choices of activity e.g. the session starts with an ice-breaker, then some sort of active game and art project, then finishes with a team-building exercise. Regular activities are the backbone of the group.

## Things to do/consider

- Having more than one regular activity e.g. one active game and one 'quieter' venture such as always having a corner for colouring (surprisingly loved by adults and young people alike).
- Will the young people get bored of the standard activity and how can it be extended or slightly amended every now and again? For instance, table tennis might typically be 'winner stays on' but one week you could have a big table tennis tournament, or the tournament might be ongoing over a few weeks.
- How you can utilise your space most efficiently and effectively e.g. if you only have space for one active game then football might not be the best regular activity unless it is played for a very short amount of time.

## Principles

- Regular activities should be simple and easy to deliver, they should be the section of the programme you don't have to think about too much.
- The first few times you deliver them, make sure everyone is clear about the rules and expectations (according to you). This way it sets a safe boundary that the young people can follow.
- Make sure all volunteers know how this activity is delivered, so that you can ensure a consistent approach.
- Have the regular activity(ies) ready so that as soon as young people walk in, they have something to occupy them.
- Make sure the activity is thoroughly risk assessed and that this is regularly reviewed.

"I like the rules to help myself to keep me calm"

"I would like to do gardening, cooking, art, sports"

## Resources

The Momentum Activity Kit provides a number of activities for you to try with your group, you may find that a couple of these become favourites with the young people and become regular activities.



# Young People Delivering Activities - Encouraging the group to 'own' their activities



## Summary

The best groups get into a safe, welcoming and comfortable rhythm where everyone knows what is expected of them. When this happens, you will find that young people will naturally take more responsibility and want to do more to help run the activities. They become empowered. It is really beneficial to encourage and empower young people, as taking responsibility, working with others, risk assessing real life situations and generally being positive are fantastic life skills.

## Things to do/consider

- The complexity of the activity - is it something that could cause lots of arguments? If so, how are you going to help the young person manage this, if you deliver the activity at all?
- How are you going to guide and give support without stepping on their toes? Subtle and underplayed support allows the young person to flourish.
- When to step in and reassert your presence if the activity is starting to go wrong. If this happens, make sure you spend time reflecting with the young leader to ensure they know the reasons for you intervening and how to avoid this in the future.
- Making delivery part of a wider programme of learning such as the Norfolk Youth Award administered by Momentum, or the Young Sports Leaders Award - see Active Norfolk for more details.

## Principles

- Trust is important for truly empowering young people - it has to work both ways if you want the young people to lead activities with success.
- Take a step by step approach so that the young people learn from their mistakes and apply this learning next time e.g. they deliver just one part of the activity first.
- Don't just expect young people to be able to deliver an activity with no problems straight away - as you will know it takes time to get confidence and skill in leading a group, your role is to support them in developing their confidence and skills.
- Encourage them to think about what they did after the activity - what went well, not so well, what would you change etc.
- Don't always have the same people leading, this is not fair on the others but remember some young people may need more support than others.
- Remember you are still responsible for the group safety and well-being including the young person(s) leading the activity.

**"I feel empowered when I'm praised for doing something"**

Young Person



## Useful links

- The information for the Norfolk Youth Award can be found at - <http://www.momentumnorfolk.org.uk/norfolk-youth-award/>
- If you want to know more about the Young Sports Leaders Awards - <http://www.sportsleaders.org/courses/awards/>
- There are some guides to empowerment, these are more wordy and quite lengthy but if you have an interest – [https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/toolbox\\_tool\\_download-file-1263/everp\\_usersguide\\_web\\_english.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/toolbox_tool_download-file-1263/everp_usersguide_web_english.pdf) (this is a European funded site and reflects research from across Europe), alternatively look up the Carnegie Trust report - <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub1455011710.pdf>



# Managing the risks - What happens when it goes wrong in activities?

## Summary

In an ideal world, young people will gather and participate in activities in a joyful, happy and trouble free manner. But we all know that put any group of people together and because we are all human, things can go wrong. Your role is to avoid this as much as possible - see the sections of 'Keeping Safe' and 'Managing Yourself' to help you with this.

However, despite all the risk assessments and all the group management techniques occasionally things can and will go wrong. At this point, you will have to manage the immediate situation and the aftermath.

## Things to do/consider

- Where are all your volunteers at any one point - as a working team, you should always know where each other are, so that you can call on each other if needed.
- The layout of your space - where are the doors, are they easy to get everyone through quickly, where are the hiding spaces etc?
- Taking a training course that will give you confidence and skills in dealing with difficult circumstances.
- How you learn from the situation and move forward positively.

## Principles

- Being proactive is better than being reactive - so keep alert to what is happening in the room, and intervene as soon as you notice things going wrong.
- Make a loud noise if you need people to stop what they are doing immediately - raise your voice or alternatively make several blasts into a whistle, people generally react to a loud noise.
- If any situation arises whether it is conflict, first aid or an emotional outburst get other adults to clear the room, take the rest of the young people away and find something else for the group to do while you deal with the situation.
- Remember safeguarding is your first priority (see the Keeping Safe section) - this means preventing people being hurt and dealing with first aid situations.
- If young people are being physically aggressive with each other, your first duty is to protect people from getting hurt - including yourself. Only you can risk assess the situation and decide whether it's safe to intervene or whether you need to take another course of action such as calling the police.
- Stay calm and take things one step at a time e.g. calm down the aggressors, hear their side of the story, listen to the aggrieved party, and consider solutions.
- If an argument or 'fight' has broken out, sit those involved down separately and talk to each one before making a decision about what to do. Encourage the young people involved to think about how they can resolve the situation.
- Don't take sides but ensure if that sanctions are suitable and proportional.
- Don't be inflexible; allow them to negotiate solutions with you and/or the other person.
- Whilst dealing with any young person whether angry or upset or hurt, try not to be alone in a room with them and never behind a closed door where people cannot see you properly.
- Don't get angry and shout at individuals - Remember that young people have lives outside of the group and you do not know what has happened to them that day so just shouting at people may just be exacerbating whatever is going on for them. It also shows you have lost control of the situation.
- Make sure you listen and acknowledge the feelings of all parties.
- Tell the committee members and make a written record of the incident.

## Useful links



- The Momentum Training Hub has a number of courses that are appropriate including an Introduction to Working with Young People, if you are not sure what you are need, talk to Momentum's Training Administrator
- The NSPCC deliver Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) with a website that includes lots of useful resources and information. This link takes you to the CPSU Briefing - Managing Challenging Circumstances - <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/managing-challenging-behaviour/>
- The Youth Work essentials site has some pointers for preventing and managing challenging situations - <http://www.youthworkessentials.org/volunteer-induction/challenging-behaviour.aspx>

## Resources

- Incident Record