

Thinking Beyond Presentations & Workshops

Contributed & adapted from Jessica Danforth

Holding a workshop is great and there are many other less structured activities that can teach sexual health and mental health and relationship information.

Being present at community activities: These could be events organized by us or may already be happening. Have a table with resources or create an event like the HIV/AIDS walks.

Have kitchen table conversations/home gatherings: Smaller gatherings can help open up casual discussions. You can organize evening get-togethers, lunches, condom activities etc. It is important to invite community youth, and have “open hours” outside of session times.

Have ways for quiet groups to participate: Group brainstorms work great with some groups, but having more options always helps. Examples can be passing out post-it notes for youth to write on, having smaller groups work on a flipchart, sitting in a circle, giving youth paper to draw how they are feeling, etc.

Include coming of age ceremonies: Incorporate traditions, community, and teachings with HIV and sexual health education. Involve youth during their transition from youth to adulthood while teaching them to be strong and healthy.

Incorporate activities: For example, beading, moccasin making, birch bark baskets/biting, cedar weaving or carving, rattle making, and more. These activities can motivate people to be a part of the discussion and may be good evening activities.

Encourage questions: Try an anonymous question box, hand out evaluations, be open and available, admit what you don't know, and make an effort to find out.

Include art-based activities: For example, fashion shows, incorporating art and poster making, newsletters, 'zines, blogs and comic strips.

Incorporate cultural practices: For example, inviting Elders to open the session, and/or to participate of observe sessions and activities, inviting drummers to open and/or close the day(s), and inviting local singers.

Remember to use humor and make it fun!

Summer Youth Camps & Gatherings

We realize that youth gatherings/camps take a lot of organizing and many people work tirelessly to make them happen. Here are some key things and tips to keep in mind when planning these events from frontline service providers and Teen Talk.

- Plan a location that is meaningful to the community and near water for extra fun.
- Consider transportation for all abilities.
- Make back up plans and have extra supplies for all weather changes (hot, rain, windy, cold).
- Stress fire and water safety. Make sure all campers have heard the rules. Keep buckets of water close by if it is dry out.
- Have extra funds in budget for unplanned supplies/circumstances.
- Aim for a balance of gender in camp workers for youth to identify with.
- Prioritize local people and talent when organizing presenters and facilitators.
- Let presenters/facilitators in on the agenda for the day(s).
- Have extra people available to help out.
- Encourage Land clean up. Hold an opening ceremony, bless the Land and speak to it, make youth teams and offer them points for collecting garbage and caretaking the Land. Have prizes for the winning team.
- Have handy supplies like duct tape, scissors, extra garbage bags etc. available (especially good for rain).
- Have a good supply of water/food that can be cooked in all weather.
- Have lots of hearty snacks available such as granola, cookies, jerky.
- Have pads/tampons, toilet paper, ear plugs, safer sex supplies, blankets and new underwear available.
- Handing out condoms/safer sex supplies on the first night of camp is a good idea.
- Hand out swag such as hoodies, reusable cups, shirts, sunglasses etc.

- Have Elders teaching/camping and intergenerational learning/sharing.
- Have youth that are interested involved in set up and organizing.
- Provide time, space and supplies for youth to write or draw anything about identity, sexuality, sexual health, mental wellness, teachings that you've learned, things that give you strength, body image, etc.
- Have games and sports equipment such as volleyballs, beach balls, Frisbees, cards, dice etc. available.
- Camp teams are a fun way to create healthy competition and mix up youth who would otherwise not meet new people. Divide youth into groups that don't normally mix in creative ways such as using Clans (Unicorn, Turtle, Moon, Bear, Wolf, Sunshine etc.). Give them camp chores and "missions" (setting up tents, hauling water) is team building.
- Have camp team activities as well as large whole group activities so youth have opportunity to make new friends in small groups and see their other friends in the large group.