



Tribal Girls' Program Toolkit

Considerations for a Tribal Girls' Empowerment Program

A toolkit design based on the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians Yawaywish Girls' Program

The La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians spent 4 years creating a personal development program for the young ladies of the community. La Jolla worked closely with Tribal Council, La Jolla families and community members to develop the goals and the content of a Girls' program to target strategic areas of girls' spiritual, emotional, and social development. We believe our Tribal young people are the future of our nation and La Jolla strives to do everything it can to support their wellness and success. This has been a joyful and rewarding journey for our Tribe, and by sharing this program with you, we hope to inspire other Tribes to develop programs for their young women.



“Yawaywish” means “beautiful” in Luiseño. Our young women carry themselves with beauty and honor, and we are proud of them as the future leaders of our Tribal Nation.

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How can I use this resource?

The resource guide contains 2 major components:

- 1) A guide for beginning and running a Tribal girls' empowerment program, and
- 2) A running commentary of three years of La Jolla Yawaywish Girls' Program reflections.

SECTION 2: PLANNING AND BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION

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Planning and Building a Firm Foundation

In creating a Tribal girls' group, Tribes can consider the overarching mission of the program. From the development of a program mission, Tribes can begin to carve out the goals and objectives which will be carried out in the program.

The Program Mission: A Firm Foundation

- Whom do we serve?
- What will be offered?
- What will change or grow?

As described in the online youth mentoring publication [MindGoals](#), programs operate more successfully when they revolve around a central mission (mindgoals.com). The mission supports the goals and objectives of a program, and plays a central role in guiding the actions and content of a program. A mission is a singular statement that expresses the central intent of a program.


A mission statement should:

- Identify the target audience
- Provide a strong foundation for the program to build goals and objectives upon
- Use present tense language
- Be brief

Mission statements define an organization's purpose and primary goal. The language is set in the present tense, and explains why the group exists, both to its members and to people outside the program. Mission statements are succinct, clear and powerful.

Tribal girls' program mission statements can be developed in a team effort that includes the Tribal Chair, Program Director and Program Facilitator. Teams should also consult with Tribal Council and Tribal Education Departments, if possible.

When a mission statement is developed, the language forms the foundation of the program, and can be formalized. It can be used to articulate the commitment a Tribe has to its young women.



A Yawaywish Girls' Program Overview

The La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians committed to taking a comprehensive approach to keeping young women safe by helping them succeed in the academic, personal and cultural aspects of their lives. The Yawaywish program created a space to encourage girls and young women of the La Jolla Reservation to take an active role in their own personal development.

The Mission of the La Jolla Yawaywish Girls' Group Program:

To Empower La Jolla Native Girls to Make Healthy Choices and Lead Happy Lives.

La Jolla's mission statement was developed by the Tribal Chairwoman, the Program Director, and the Program Facilitator with input from the La Jolla Tribal Council and Education Department. The mission statement demonstrated a formalized written commitment by the Tribe for the young women on the Reservation.

A Tribal resolution that addresses a girls' group mission can send a powerful message to community members!

{commentary}

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We hope readers will find the suggestions and information in the resource guide useful to develop and facilitate a girls' group. The Yawaywish program commentary offers a set of helpful reflections on the successes and lessons learned over the course of our program.



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A Context for Native-Led Girls' Groups

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Why a Girls' Program?

Girls' groups provide gender-responsive discussions and activities to young women on a consistent basis. They address issues related to gender, social development, personal and community health and safety.

A secure and welcoming place to interact with their female peers, girls' groups foster a communal space where girls learn to communicate, challenge, and assist one another as they work through issues that arise in their daily experiences. Facilitated by an adult female on a consistent basis, participants are guided as they co-create response strategies, personal achievement goals, and develop their own positions on questions that arise in the group. Successful groups are founded on models that address girls' needs and recognize the strengths of group participants. To build an understanding of girls' needs, Tribes can consider Jean. B. Miller's Relational-Cultural Model to frame their understanding of female development. Miller's 1991 model recognizes relationships as the central, organizing feature of a girl's development. Relationships among peers and older individuals become the bedrock of a girl's feeling of self-worth and security.

A girls' connection with others is a central feature in her psychological make-up. The quality of these connections is a determining factor in her overall psychological health. Building on these premises, a Tribal girls' program affirms these commitments through the use of culture, tradition and community support.



A secure and welcoming place to interact with their female peers, girls' groups foster a communal space in which girls learn to communicate, refine, and assist one another as they work through ideas and issues that arise in their daily experiences.

Significance of a Tribally-Grounded Girls' Program

Tribal youth programs encourage participants to form lasting relationships by discovering interests and commonalities through the lens of Tribal culture.

Drawing upon traditional practices, Tribal value systems, and relationship models, Tribal girls' programs use culture-specific teachings to offer insight into issues that are important to their participants. Through the process, Tribal young women strategize and develop positive responses to real-life pressures, framed in a more firm understanding of their Tribal cultures.

What can a Tribal Girls' Program be used for?

- Addressing issues that arise with young women in a Tribal community
- Fostering leadership and team building skills
- Applying Tribal cultural values and expectations to everyday life
- Creating lasting relationships among Tribal young women
- Encouraging trust-based relationships with Tribal adults
- Supporting a legacy of resilient women in a Tribal community



Tribal Community Involvement – A Necessary Component

Engaging in community-wide outreach gives parents, guardians, caregivers, and interested community members the opportunity to take Tribal community actions to ensure their children's health and safety. Engagement with existing local resources can add depth and cultural significance to girls' programming.

Girls' groups create a space to explore knowledge and behavioral practices to help girls mature as caring, responsible, successful young women. Research from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention suggests that when youth and their families play a part in the creation of programs, they are 90% more likely to complete the programs. Tribal youth programs in particular are more successful when they communicate openly with the Tribal community. Community input is necessary for a Tribal youth program's overall acceptance and trust, as it encourages future participants and community members to inform and support program goals.

As a program is developed, parents, guardians and caregivers can be encouraged to visit with the program to offer input regarding issues important to families and their girls. In offering young women and their families the opportunity to interact with the content and flow of programs that serve them, programs affirm girls as a valuable resource and source of pride in the community. Community resources – whether they come from the local health clinic, Tribal safety and prevention programs, or cultural resources – supply programs with experts who are familiar with the pressures girls face in the community.



Tribal communities, as a cultural and social body, are well positioned to shape the development of Tribal youth. A Tribe can best serve its young members when it is aware of the issues young people face, and plays a central role in their mentoring process.

Tribal Community Outreach Strategies:

- Community brainstorms over program content and focus
- Question and answer sessions on specific topics
- Potluck dinner discussions
- Presentations to General Council
- Door-to-door advocacy
- Pamphlets and handouts sent home to families
- Information sharing via E-media

“Although early childhood experiences for young women vary according to family background, cultural heritage, and neighborhood environment, women often tell a consistent story about what characteristics defined their personalities in childhood”

(“Juvenile Female Offenders: A Status of the States Report,” OJJDP, 1998).



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Planning and Building a Firm Foundation

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{commentary}



Target Audience: Whom Should the Program Serve, and How?

{commentary}



Audience: A Yawawish Model:

The Program Director and Facilitator accessed Tribal enrollment records to identify girls in the community who would be eligible for a girls' program. It then identified non-Native youth in the community who could also participate in the program. An introductory mail-out was created and sent to girls' families, inviting them to a meeting at the Tribal Hall to learn about and discuss the goals of a girls' program.

Native and non-Native middle and high school girls and their families on the La Jolla Reservation were invited to attend the program, because the community is comprised of many backgrounds. La Jolla thought it would offer a middle school group (girls ages 10-14) and a high school group (girls ages 14-18) because the Program Director and Facilitator believed the community demand would be highest for these ages.

Through family surveys administered in General Council meetings, the Education Program, and phone calls, program staff learned the community had a strong interest in programming for their younger girls as well. La Jolla subsequently added a third group to the Yawaywish program, serving girls ages 8-9.



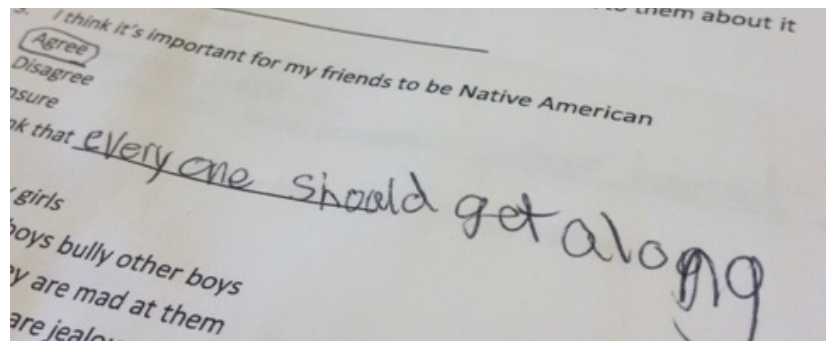
- Identify target ages
- Conduct surveys
- Use mission, goals, and survey results to determine appropriate content

Girls' programs help at-risk groups of young women acquire the life skills they need to make positive decisions in their lives. Tribes should consider who their young women are not only in terms of their ages, but by reflecting on the pressures they face in the Tribal community, issues they encounter at school, and girls' family dynamics. These factors help indicate girls' emotional ages.

Assessing the "emotional ages" of girls in a girls' group can offer preliminary insight into a group's dynamic. In a group setting, girls with relatable experiences can help one another work through response strategies. Some girls will have experienced things faster than others, and surveys and discussions in the beginning can help the Facilitator decide how groups should be made.

Age-appropriate groups give girls the opportunity to belong to something they view as positive and productive as peers, with values they can identify with culturally.

When the mission statement is developed, the goals can then be identified. When goals are identified, the Facilitator can use them to frame early surveys that can generate the information needed to best serve the participants.



Useful Tip:

Surveys gauge participants' knowledge and reveal areas for programs to focus on. A needs assessment helps the program research, identify, and reflect on the needs of the youth the program will serve.

Serving Needs Strategically: A Program Plan



- **Create an Advisory Board**
- **Use surveys to gather data**
- **Identify what information and partners are needed**
- **Create a strategic plan**

Developing a strategic plan for a Girls' group is an important first step in establishing the framework, partnerships and the expectations to support and sustain a group. When programs carefully consider the mental, physical, and spiritual conditions of their youth, they can gather partner support to best serve the needs of their participants.

Strategic plans should be developed under the direction of the Project Director and Facilitator, in close collaboration with the Tribal Council and other integral Tribal community members. Groups are encouraged to draw upon the Office of Juvenile Justice template as a starting place for developing a group Strategic Plan (Tribal Youth Program online Strategic Plan Tool: <http://www.Tribalyouthprogram.org/tools/strategic-planning-tool>).

A Strategic Plan Includes:

- **Program Mission Statement**
- **Advisory Board Members and Responsibilities**
- **Community Partners and their Roles**
- **Needs Assessment and Available Local Resources**
- **Program Action Plan**
- **Data Collection Plan**
- **Evaluation Plan**
- **Capacity Building and Sustainability Plan**

To develop a plan, the Program Coordinator and Facilitator can assemble an advisory committee, share the mission and goals, and begin an early identification of the partners the program would like to work with.

Yawaywish Audience Frames the Program Plan

After the introductory meeting, the Program Director and Facilitator conducted surveys on each of the potential program participants. The surveys gathered information on girls' perceptions of themselves and others, their knowledge of safety and prevention information, their dating experiences and more.

From the feedback they received, Program staff were able to gauge the emotional ages and acquire some basic insight into the needs of potential participants. Survey results revealed girls had a limited knowledge of bullying and texting issues, many girls were dating actively, and a majority of participants were not aware of local health resources available to them.

Needs Dictate Content!

Potential participants were put into a corresponding age-appropriate group, and the survey results were used to frame the program's needs assessment.

The 10-14 and 15-18 age groups' content focused on relationships, bullying, body image, alcohol and drug experimentation, healthy choices and more. The 8-9 year old group focused on friendships, celebrating positive things about being a girl, and learning to use their voices as a confidence tool. The Facilitator reached out to Indian Health Clinic, Avellaka Domestic Violence Awareness and La Jolla Community members for future program support.

{commentary}

Tribal Community Involvement is Integral to Planning!

Community outreach can be used to gather information needed to develop a needs assessment and gain trust in a new program. Tribal community members should be invited throughout the planning phase, and be given adequate time to offer feedback on program goals and content.

{commentary}

Yawaywish Community Outreach

In the planning phase, parent nights and community meetings were essential to the success of Yawaywish because they offered introductions between young women, families and program staff. These gatherings offered community an opportunity to give input on cultural activities and program content, and discover program areas to volunteer.

Personalized invitations were hand-delivered to residences to let community members and girls know they were welcome and wanted. The Program Director and Facilitator knocked on front doors and introduced themselves. In doing this the program staff created a personal, more intimate relationship with community members as they worked toward fostering mutual trust and respect for their program.

Yawaywish Tip:

Yawaywish staff set up a craft activity for girls in introductory meetings. Early interaction among girls can lead to earlier friendship formation and trust-building.



- Host parent/community focus meetings to identify information and themes families want girls to learn
- Use community knowledge to identify appropriate cultural content
- Share ideas in a friendly, community forum to attract participants and people who can assist in program areas
- Use information to develop action plan
- Share information in all community areas on Reservation

The Difference Details Can Make

- Decorate to warm atmosphere
- Food is a great recruitment tool
- Demonstrate commitment through activities that value families
- Think Tribally: engage concerns in a discussion format

When Tribal members are treated with special care, they are affirmed in the Tribe's commitment to the needs of its people. The Program Director and Facilitator can create a warm ambience for the families invited to information sessions. By bringing in food, linens, flowers, candles and special place settings, staff can help girls and families understand the program's commitment to respecting the community.

When goals of a new program are shared, staff can ask for feedback. Families and community members should be encouraged to express concerns in a discussion format, and be given open and positive feedback from program staff. This is an important time to learn about family dynamics, community expectations and concerns about a new program.



Useful Tip:

Show Tribal families their girls' development is supported by team members who pay attention to details, and who are willing to learn about the needs of their girls.

Creating Program Goals: Achievable Outcomes

Program goals are the overarching intentions a group sets for itself and its participants. They can be large or small, and can include acquiring knowledge, improving communication skills with others, and learning a new skill.

Goals Checklist:

- Are your goals consistent with your mission?
- Are your goals aligned with your Tribe's cultural values?
- Do your goals describe the outcomes or desired overall progress of your participants?

Program goals are developed as the program meets with pre-program Tribal audiences. They are designed as a strategic response to the needs and desires shared with program staff and the advisory committee in the planning phase of the program. From the goals, the objectives are developed, and outline the means by which the goals will be achieved.

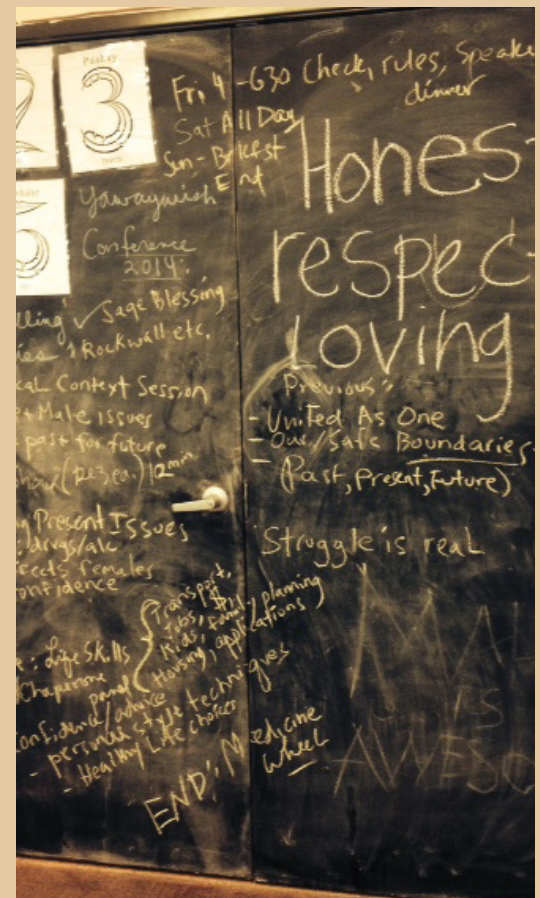


The Yawaywish Program -

The Goals are to:

- Provide mentors
- Nurture positive female interaction
- Foster critical thinking
- Incorporate Luiseño culture into weekly programming
- Cultivate participant empowerment as a group
- Improve participant self-esteem
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Provide Tribal and outside resources to participants and families

{commentary}



Program Objectives: Steps to Address Your Audience's Needs

{commentary}



Yawaywish Program – The Objectives:

Objective 1: To create the La Jolla Yawaywish girls' group and provide weekly intensive support to all girls on the Reservation, ages 8 and up.

Objective 2: To provide culture-based prevention and personal empowerment resources to the participants involved in the girls' group.

Objective 3: To engage the girls group in Luiseño cultural activities to strengthen their Native identity, self-esteem, assertiveness, and ability to make healthy decisions.

Use Your Existing Tribal Resources!

The La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians values leaning upon resources already in place at the Tribe. Because Tribal programs on the Reservation are primarily federally-funded, La Jolla has existing programs which offer materials and resources the Yawaywish Program drew from. These include domestic violence and personal safety professionals, prevention specialists, Tribal Elders, Education Staff and Tribal community culture advocates. Each of these programs was recruited to assist the Facilitators of Yawaywish in planning programs, seminars, conferences and question and answer opportunities for program participants.

Objectives Should:

- Support program goals
- Reinforced with specific activities
- Include measureable outcomes
- Integrate Tribal culture

Program objectives spell out the tasks, resources, and the activities a program engages to help participants meet the program goals. A group's activities will reinforce the objectives a program sets. Program objectives can also help programs identify the areas data should be collected to evaluate the effectiveness of a program.

Tribal Girls' Program objectives are effective when they incorporate

- Consistent social interaction
- Reflective personal attitudes
- Activities supported by Tribal and outside resources
- Respect for Tribal culture and values
- Address prevention and empowerment

Programs in Tribal communities are unique because they are often staffed and gather participants from a limited population. Tribes are working hard to address the difficult realities of Reservation life, including the prevalence of violence, substance abuse and truancy. Program objectives should reflect an awareness of the issues Tribal youth face, and should support activities that give young women the tools they need to address difficult realities they face.

“Youth can be insulated from risk factors by holding healthy beliefs and engaging in pro-social behaviors and being around individuals, community institutions and peer groups that hold these views. The more youth are around these positive factors and influences the less chance they will be attracted to negative and antisocial groups such as gangs”

(Krisberg, 2005).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Facilitator

- Preparedness
- Trust
- Guidance
- Referrals
- Consultation with Tribal Families
- Consultation with Tribal Culture Leaders

Building and facilitating trust is the central responsibility of a Facilitator. When young women do not feel physically or emotionally safe, their self-worth is affected. They can experience difficulty in developing trust in relationships. In a girls' group, trust is the foundation of all interaction, and groups cannot discuss topics openly and in a significant way unless trust is established and upheld in the group.

Participants in a program must feel and believe they are free from the risk of alienation or rejection in a group. This is an important factor in choosing and training the right Facilitator. The years from 8-18 in many girls' lives hold the very conversations which shape their personal identities. Climates interfering or discouraging personal expression weaken a girl's ability to develop positive connections with others, make positive choices, or learn to trust others.

Research suggests that the formation of a girl's mature identity cannot be based solely on separation from her parents/guardians, but must also include her enduring relationships with adults. A parent, teacher, counselor, probation officer or other adult who demonstrates ongoing commitment and caring can play an essential role in a girl's development. Conversely, the lack of a close, caring adult during adolescence can interrupt or delay a girl's development. Without a close adult and without confidence in her own judgment or abilities, she may be more likely to turn to her peers for support and validation (http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/principles/ch1_4.html).

Looking Back: Including a Co-Facilitator is something the Yawaywish program would like to implement in girls' programming in the future. A Co-Facilitator shares in the responsibilities of administering the program, and assists with all aspects of the program including: generating ideas and themes for the program, outreaching to potential and new participants, coordinating weekly activities, and helping observe the participants. Having an additional set of eyes and offering additional input lends the group greater diversity of experience and input.

Yawaywish Facilitator – The Job Description:

The Yawaywish program Facilitator must have experience in the local American Indian community and have experience working with educational settings.

Duties include

- Facilitating weekly girls group talking circles
- Creating and deploying a Girls Group Curriculum
- Planning the annual La Jolla Yawaywish Empowerment Conference
- Creating and deploying a program evaluation plan
- Recruiting La Jolla participants for three age groups
- Collaborating with the Avellaka Anti-Domestic Violence Program
- Maintaining a journal
- Retaining all program files and collecting and retaining data per grant requirements

The Facilitator will meet on a regular basis with the Advisory committee, Tribal Council, parents/guardians and students. Parent consent will be required for participation. This position will be supervised by the Project Director and Tribal Council.



{commentary}

The Role of the Facilitator

- Engaging girls in positive personal development by focusing on themes and questions relevant to their age
- Offering a variety of viewpoints to allow girls to come to their own conclusions on a topic
- Incorporating Tribal language and culture on a consistent basis, drawing upon Tribal community cultural resources
- Keeping group focused on topic and activities
- Creating and administering evaluation pieces on a consistent basis to measure progress
- Encouraging productive participant responses – responses that allow the group to discuss among themselves
- Showing participants how to question negative responses with empathy rather than judgment
- Promoting empathy among peers
- Encouraging success through directing girls' participation and input
- Fostering group time as a release and celebration -- although serious issues are addressed in the group, it should be facilitated with a sense of joy, participant affirmation, and emotional wellness
- Incorporating community resources into topics and discussions on a regular basis
- Keeping abreast of issues that arise between girls
- Informing the advisory committee of any issues arising in group
- Maintaining a consistent meeting schedule and fostering consistency for group

The Facilitator Cultural Advantage:

The Program Facilitator assumes the position of the program leader, and can be someone from the girls' own community who provides the tools, resources, and guidance needed to bridge the gap between Native girls' expectations and realities of daily living. A Tribal community member may be more likely to understand the experiences of girls, family dynamics and gender roles, the historical pressures the Tribal community has faced, and have a more intimate understanding of the kinds of support participants will need through the course of the program. A Tribal community person may also be better able to address the community at meetings, and ultimately gain the support of the Tribal community in the work she is doing. If a non-Tribal individual is involved in leadership, she should have demonstrated experience in Tribal communities. She must consistently incorporate respected Tribal community members as advocates, and draw upon Tribal cultural resources throughout the facilitation of the program.

Group Confidentiality

- Recognize the community's dynamics and challenges
- Understand what is at risk in sharing and not sharing information
- Establish rules for sharing information as a group

Facilitators should strive to express themselves openly with their groups, while establishing boundaries around personal and sensitive information. Participants can be highly interested in personal experiences, and can learn many realities from Facilitators. Both Facilitators and participants, however, must articulate the kind of information that should and should not be shared in groups. “[P]urposeful support can come from adults outside [of] a child’s family. Caring adults from outside a child’s family may provide support for youth who have experienced unsatisfactory relationships within their families” (Olds et al., 1997; Hawley and DeHaan, 1996; Werner and Smith, 1982, 1992).

Useful Tip: Communal Commitment

Groups can work together to create a confidentiality statement to be displayed in the meeting area. It can serve as a communal reminder of the importance of respecting others’ personal information.

Tribal communities are complex, and information travels quickly. As in any other community, youth and families experience the effects of drug and alcohol abuse, violence and more. Groups must understand that in all work done in Tribal contexts, maintaining confidentiality is imperative. The group should discuss the meaning of confidentiality in terms of personal and public sharing of information, and agree to group rules identifying the way participants will treat information shared or heard in the group. Working with the Facilitator, participants can also develop a list of issues they believe should be reported to the Facilitator.



The Mandated Reporter: Know the State and the Tribe's Reporting Rules and Expectations!

{ commentary }



Lean on Your Resources!

In the early stage of the program, the Program Director and Facilitator met with Tribal Council, the Education Department and with Child Protective Services to outline the protocol the program would take in the event a serious issue arose in group. Reporting and disclosure are very important steps programs need to understand when working with youth, and leaning on the Tribal Council's knowledge and resources is integral to a successful program.

The Yawaywish Facilitator experienced a number of occasions in which her position as group leader forced her to consider the way she operated outside of the group. Our Facilitator lived in the same community as the participants and witnessed outside actions and behaviors by the girls. The Facilitator sought Program Director advice, and when needed, brought an issue to Tribal Council for input.

La Jolla quickly learned that a Facilitator is not always qualified to offer mentoring to girls who have experienced traumatic or other difficult events. The Facilitator should use all the necessary steps to connect her participants with the information and resources identified in the community resource portion of the Strategic Plan.

Reference the Administration for Native Americans' Child Welfare Information Network, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/how.cfm>, for more information on state and federal policies on mandated reporting.

- Clearly identify what a Youth Facilitator is responsible for
- Understand what participant actions or behaviors should be reported
- Identify the protocol for reporting
- Determine Tribal Council and Tribal Community's reporting expectations

Due to the intimate nature of girls' groups, problematic or traumatic behaviors or events can be revealed in group, or a participant's negative experience may be learned about after an event has occurred. The Facilitator must determine what information should be reported or shared, and should clearly review reporting procedures with all staff. Each state and Tribe retains laws requiring specific people to report suspicion of child abuse, neglect, and other problematic actions. A Facilitator should educate herself on all reporting requirements. While some States require all people interacting with youth to report their concerns, many States identify specific professionals as mandated reporters. These often include social workers, medical and mental health professionals, teachers, and child care providers. Specific procedures are usually established for mandated reporters to make referrals to child protective services.

Facilitator Self-Disclosure

It is the role of the Facilitator to determine how much she wants to share with participants. The Facilitator should consider the following information as she develops her role in the group:

1. **Developing strong relationships with participants is based on a high level of trust among all participants.**
2. **Degrees of self-disclosure should be discussed before the program begins among the Facilitator, Co-Facilitator and other related Tribal entities so that everyone is aware the level of which the staff will be operating with the participants.**
3. **Age-appropriate personal stories and experiences can be helpful in explaining how situations can affect our lives as adults. In order to gain others' trust, there are times we open ourselves to trust others. This can be difficult for some people in the Facilitator role. Being open and honest, however, teaches participants to develop trust by engaging in a group.**
4. **Determine the reporting procedure for identified at-risk behaviors or actions that occur in the group. Determine who will have access to what information from a group.**

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

- Respect for others
- Sharing
- Empathy
- Personal Accountability

Tribal Girls' programs help girls develop and sustain fruitful, respect-based relationships with others. They supply the cultural lessons and community support girls need to mature as resilient, thoughtful young women. There are many ways this can be done, but like an organization's mission, trust is established when programs understand the realities of their participants' lives, and base themselves on a firm commitment to treating them with respect. Foundational principles can include learning to respect others, the value of sharing, developing empathy, and upholding personal accountability.

Roles of Participants Include:

- Listening to others
- Sharing personal information with others
- Showing respect to Facilitator and group members
- Reflecting on personal attitudes
- Completing all activities

The developmental pathways in a girl's life are the foundational experiences and relationships that influence her. These experiences shape the way she interacts with others and reacts to pressures. They play a part in how she perceives her self-worth and value in society. Understanding the negative developmental pathways that can lead girls to delinquency involves recognizing the challenges that may put them at risk of delinquency.



Looking Back: When Girls' Paths Intersect, Tension Can Occur!



{commentary}

The first few months of hosting groups was bumpy. La Jolla is a small Tribal community. Many of the girls who came to group were related to one another, and almost all of them went to school together. The girls brought the tensions and issues they had with one another in the community into the initial group. They did not understand the boundaries or purpose of the group in the first group meetings.

The Yawaywish Facilitator learned to address the issues that arose between girls consistently, and did not use group time up to gossip. She reinforced the goals of the group, and required a commitment from the girls to uphold the mission of the program. Because they were getting positive attention, girls learned they were going to be expected to communicate with one another, work out their issues, and act respectfully in the group. Outside issues had special time in group discussion, but only at the Facilitator's discretion. After 2 months, the girls' groups saw a drastic change as girls learned their boundaries in group.

Yawaywish Tip:

Expect some bumps in the beginning as girls get to know one another on a more personal level. Be prepared and have a response strategy ready!

Some Thoughts on Girls' Needs:

The OJJDP's 1998 publication *Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming*, offers a list of girls' personal and social "perceived needs." Considering a girl's developmental pathways may reveal a pattern of experiences that shape how she thinks about herself and others.

- **A girl's perceived need for physical safety and healthy physical development**
 - May indicate she is challenged by poverty, homelessness, violence, inadequate health care, inadequate nutrition, or substance abuse.
- **A girl's need for trust, love, respect, validation from caring adults to foster healthy emotional development and form positive relationships**
 - May indicate she is challenged by abandonment, family dysfunction, or poor communication.
- **A girl's need for positive female role models to develop healthy identity as a woman**
 - May indicate she is challenged by sexist, racist, homophobic messages, or lack of community support.
- **A girl's need for safety to explore sexuality at own pace for healthy sexual development**
 - May indicate she is challenged by sexual abuse, exploitation, or negative messages about female sexuality.
- **A girl's need to belong, to feel competent and worthy**
 - May indicate she is challenged by weakened family ties, negative peer influences, academic failure, or low self-esteem.



Girls groups help participants develop strong relationship practices. In helping girls understand how to communicate their needs to others in a positive way, groups set them up with communication building blocks for the future.

Decoding Girls' Communication

The “circle” model of communication offered by Hossfield and Taorima is a powerful resource because it incorporates key communication practices to promote relationship and communication habits to deter negative relationship building. Programs can consider the following roles and communication practices. The positive and negative practices can help program participants understand communication patterns, and learn to decode them as they enter into new relationships in a girls' program. The following relationship practices are understood as self-driven, positive relationship building behaviors. Non-relationship based communication showcases many of the behaviors girls programs seek to address.

Positive Communication Practices

Confidence
Empathy
Focus on self, own experiences
Supportive
Non-intrusive
Self-Paced,
No Interruption
Connection to peers and adults
Respect
Personal differences accepted
**Self-governing and
consensus-driven**
Listening
Non-Judgment

Negative Relationship Communication Practices

Gossip, exposure, rumors
Using should, shouldn't language
Interruptions
Focus on others other than self
Advice-giving
Pressure to perform, find answers
Analytical, interpreting
Competitive
Lack of honesty
Alienation of self or others
Disrespectful
Authoritarian

Girls Circle Facilitator's Manual





Contents: Section 3

The Program Guide: Helpful Policies and Practices from the Yawaywish Girls' Program

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Code of Conduct: Discuss, Learn, Agree and Confirm

Over three years of creating and running a girls group, the La Jolla Yawaywish Program learned a number of lessons in creating curricula, establishing a routine, and overcoming obstacles. This section offers some program reflections and advice for groups as they develop the day-to-day proceedings of their program.

“One of the most courageous things you can do is identify yourself, know who you are, what you believe in and where you want to go.”

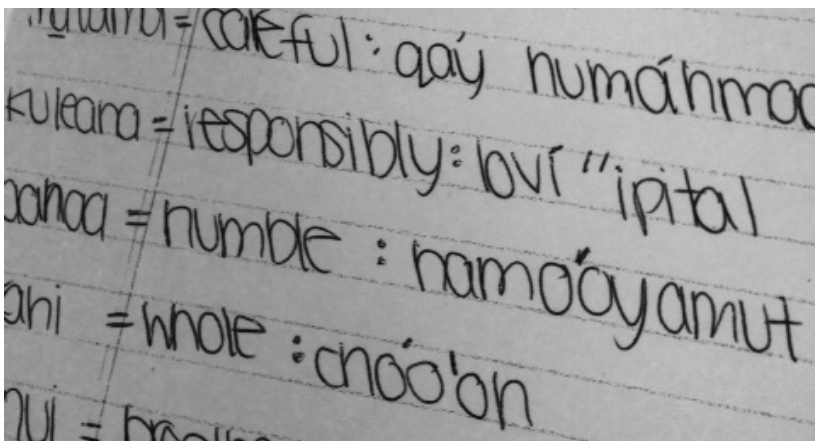
- Sheila Murray Bethel

Creating a code of conduct reinforces the rules, confidentiality agreement and roles that will be assumed in the group. It is a binding agreement among all group participants. The code is developed by the girls, with oversight from the Facilitator. Program participants are given time to consider the different elements of the code, as it becomes the basis of administering all interaction that occurs in the group.

Participants come to a consensus on the guiding behaviors, responses, attitudes and roles that all participants will uphold in the group. After sharing and discussing the program mission, goals and objectives, the Facilitator helps girls consider the different components of the program, guiding them to develop rules the group will use to hold one another accountable to the program objectives and activities.

During the first group meetings, participants can develop a code of conduct by:

- Listing the qualities they look for in a group
- Discussing and identifying the kinds of activities and behaviors expected and supported by the participants
- Agreeing the rules will be used to govern meetings
- Identifying behaviors and actions unacceptable or disrespectful to the group



Yawaywish Code Commitment

The Yawaywish Code of Conduct was developed by following commitment, “A girl’s connection with others is a central organizing feature in her psychological make-up. The quality of these connections determines her overall psychological health.”

Code Development Activity:

Led by the Facilitator, the Yawaywish group discussed how both verbal and nonverbal cues can be interpreted by others. The group agreed that they wanted a safe space where badgering and put downs were not allowed. From these conversations, the girls were guided by the Facilitator to identify the core components of the rules and guidelines of the Yawaywish group. The girls keep it posted (and decorated!) on the classroom wall for reference throughout the year.

Yawaywish Tip:

When a new member joins the group, the guidelines are reviewed and discussed. Additionally, when there is a breach in the code or when a code item is relevant to a participant’s behavior, the code is reviewed as a group.

{commentary}

Rituals

- Use same group format each meeting
- Demonstrate consistency in group activities and practices
- Know when to change to a better routine or format

{ commentary }

Yawayish Rituals

Once a meeting has officially begun, the Yawayish Facilitator

- explains the theme or topic of that day,
- describes the activities that will occur and guests who will participate,
- engages the participants to answer any questions or concerns they have that are relevant to the theme,
- ends with a reflective activity.

Looking Back:

Because of transportation issues or events at school, there were times when the group forewent the use of their beginning or ending rituals. The Facilitator observed there were times when the beginning ritual was not used, the girls had a harder time staying focused on the activities of the group. Over time, the group learned that the ritual of beginning quiet time, or prayer at the end of group was integral to the cohesiveness of the meeting, and useful to orienting participants to the activities and messages shared with them.

Useful Tip: Make Space!

The location of the group meetings should remain consistent and be held in a quiet, private space. There must be room for creative projects, but more importantly, girls should have the capacity to discuss their opinions and share their experiences without compromising information or experiencing outside interruption.

Yawayish believes that creating group rituals affords girls groups stability and structure. Each group begins with an opening that encourages reflection, brings the group together, and inspires open and thoughtful communication.

Facilitators help establish the feeling of safety and trust with a group by creating a sense of consistency with a group. This can be done in a number ways, including

- Reminding girls of the goals of a unit
- Explaining the theme or topic of a meeting and how it relates to the unit
- Engaging participants in any questions that concern the topic or theme
- Explaining the activity and or guests who will accompany the materials covered in the meeting
- Using reflection exercises to reinforce lesson

There are times when material may be difficult for girls to talk about. Girls' experiences are varied, and there will be occasions when a subject strikes a negative chord with a participant. At this time, the Facilitator can engender a sense of comfort by offering girls an easy creative ritual to accompany a topic – coloring an image, beading or weaving – to give participants something to do to channel their unease or anxiety.



Units and Content

The Facilitator develops units, themes and their content from the feedback received in community and advisory board meetings and the information gathered in surveys.

Girls Groups are designed to address the needs and interests of girls, and should offer guidance and instruction in learning the information and applying it to their personal lives.

Girls group units or themes should be broad in nature, and allow room for different topics within their structure. Units can address issues in the community such as safety, family dynamics, and Tribal culture. They can address behavioral themes such as relationships, dating, personal expression, bullying, team building and more.

The content of units focus on specific aspects of the larger concept, and can be broken down weekly or run for multiple weeks, as needed by participants in a group. Group meetings can last from one to one and a half hours each week, and can be held at the Tribal Hall, Education Center, or any other Tribal or community building.



Yawaywish Group Content:

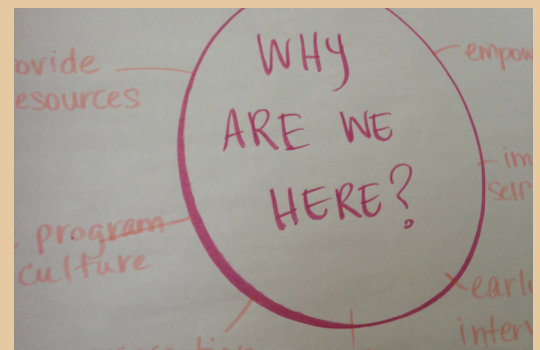
La Jolla's girls' group units run anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 weeks, depending on the complexity and interest from the girls.

Yawaywish units include:

- healthy bodies-healthy minds
- healthy relationships
- drug and alcohol prevention
- planning for the future, educational achievement and career goal setting
- body image and self-esteem

Luiŝeño culture activities include basket weaving, traditional dress-making, Luiŝeño language class and storytelling. Tribal culture was integrated weekly into group in the form of a story, a prayer, a lesson, interaction with a Tribal Elder, or a cultural activity.

Unit resources were also gathered from the local Department of Education, Office of Community Services, online materials from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, the Administration of Native Americans, the OJJDP Tribal Youth Program, local Tribal Community Resources and materials from Indian Health Service.



{commentary}

Planning and Activities

- Be prepared: use structured themes
- Reinforce with planned activities
- Call on the expertise of others
- Remember to reflect

{commentary}



Yawaywish Reflection Time:

When there are issues that the Facilitator needs some extra time and consideration, she will often assign a journal writing exercise in order for the girls to have time to think quietly about what they have learned and discussed that day. Most group meetings use a combination of discussion, creativity, and writing. It is important to allow the girls time to discuss how they feel about issues with one another as they are discussing a new topic, and creating something with one another.

The Facilitator learned Yawaywish girls share personal information best when they are working on a small activity or project. She offered the girls a small art or craft project to work on when they were discussing things that had the potential to be highly personal or difficult. Easy small craft activities can allow girls time to formulate a response to a topic.

Looking Back:

There were many times the group meetings were comprised of only a handful of girls. Sports schedules, a family issue, or an illness often reduced the group to a smaller number, and the activities for that day were altered to fit a smaller group. We learned to always have a contingency plan for days when groups were smaller than expected. Never cancel a small group! Small groups can prove a challenge in getting multiple voice of input in conversations, but can also serve as an opportune time to spend quality time with girls in a more personal setting.

Being prepared for each meeting is integral to the success of a group session, and allows the group members to utilize their short time together efficiently.

Crafts or creative materials used during the meeting should be purchased and developed before a group meets. The Facilitator should create a project example beforehand to work from. In doing so, the Facilitator can anticipate any logistical roadblocks before the girls begin a project.

Useful Tip: Make Space!

Using art projects or small tasks can help girls focus on the information covered in a meeting.



Activities on the Move

Girls can develop their commitment to a group when they have the opportunity to explore services and events away from the Reservation. Travel to new spaces helps girls develop a sense of solidarity. If funding allows, groups can take advantage of the resources and information offered at schools, businesses and community centers. They can offer resources and a new point of view to girls, further opening their minds to the world around them.

Consider activities that engage hands and minds when planning a trip:

- Health centers and hospitals
- Women's Resource Centers
- State Parks and State Agencies
- YMCA or Girl Scouts
- Local businesses
- Local colleges and universities
- Dentistry, Cosmetology, Trade or Tech Schools
- Newspapers
- Outreach events and fairs
- Federal Agency Offices – TANF, BIA, HUD etc.



Useful Tip: Call Ahead!

Share your needs or expectations with the people you are going to visit. You will better address your group's needs and interests, and may anticipate issues that could arise in advance.

Service Learning

A set of strategic activities, service learning projects are an effective way to involve girls in a community. Service learning projects help participants make a difference in others' lives as they work toward a common goal. In the process, groups learn to work together and communicate positively with one another, as they develop a sense of pride in completing a project.

Service learning projects can include:

- Volunteering at a community event
- Assisting with a Tribal Elders project
- Partnering with Girl Scouts on a project
- Offering time and assistance to another Tribal department
- Teaching younger Tribal members a skill or craft
- Helping Tribal community with a project



Useful Tip: Think Forward!

Groups can offer service learning and plan for the future. They can host fundraisers to help raise money for supplies or an event. This kind of activity affords participants the opportunity to create items to be auctioned or shared, learn planning and organization skills, and engage community members interested in assisting in helping with an event. In setting benchmarks and developing a schedule and plan, girls learn the importance of organization and consistency in developing plans in their lives.

Yawaywish Girls' Role Playing

Each group of girls had an opportunity to role play different scenarios. Role playing offers girls reality-based scenarios to help them anticipate and evaluate how they would act in a given situation.

The 8-10 year olds role played with friendship pressures. Girls acted out situations involving peer pressure, gossip and judging.

The 11-12 year olds role played with bullying, peer pressure, substance use, and friendship pressures.

The 13-18 year olds role played with dating and relationships, peer pressure, texting and online scenarios, substance use and more.

Yawaywish Tip:
The Facilitator should reinforce the message is incorporated as a teaching moment at the end of the exercise. Don't leave the girls' discussion at a point where the correct behaviors are not identified.

Role Playing

Role playing encourages groups to actively engage in a problem-solving. Participants are challenged to develop potential solutions to the identified problem and then try out their comfort level in implementing the solution. In the process participants can realize the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solutions, and may discover new facets of the problem. In *Facilitating Children's Reflection and Self Expression Through Creativity* by Phan Y Ly, a Creativity Arts and Development Specialist offers additional materials which are useful in fostering a sense of thoughtfulness in groups of young women: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/14333395/Facilitating-Children-Reflection-and-Expression-Through-Creativity>.

In this activity, participants learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses in handling difficult situations and can receive feedback from other group members in order to improve their knowledge and skills.



Useful Tip: Teachable Moment

Post-role playing time is a great time to have participants reflect on choices they made or language they used! This can be done through discussion and journaling.

Group Reflection Time

- To reflect is to learn
- Make needed adjustments or acquire knowledge
- Support the success of next meeting or theme

Reflection is integral to the group activities because it helps the participants make a clear and thoughtful connection between the themes discussed in the beginning of the group, and the discussions and activities that were performed in the meeting.

Reflection is of utmost importance in the role of the Facilitator as she leads the group to think critically through an issue. University of Vermont's [Reflection Manual](http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/activities.html) (Reed and Coliba, Chapter 5) offers a useful list of group and personal reflection and learning exercises that can easily be tailored for a girls' group). Suggestions for reflecting and learning can include the use of sentence stems, the Hoshim Technique, role playing and more. A few are offered below (http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/activities.html).

Sentence Stems

Sentence stems can be useful in helping participants begin to think about their expectations for the experience [or their perceptions after concluding the experience].

Sentence Stem Examples:

- "Today I hope..."
- "I am anxious about..."
- "I expected community members to be..."

The Hoshim Technique asks participants to list answers, solutions, ideas, or opinions on "Post-it notes" or stickies. For example, a Facilitator that is leading a conflict resolution workshop may ask for participants to generate ten responses to low conflict, medium conflict, and high conflict issues on Post-It notes. Similar to a free association, the Post-It notes are then placed on the wall. The entire group then has a large gallery exhibit walk-through of all the notes in which they can review the responses to conflict.



Useful Tip: Teachable Moment

The Hoshim Technique can be an effective tool for assisting groups not open to discussion or are stuck on a particular issue. It can also be useful in getting conversations started at the beginning of a meeting.

Enduring Goals

- Value positive commitments
- Emerge from program content and discussion
- Developed by participants
- Spell out a long term commitment

{commentary}

Yawaywish Enduring Goals

The Yawaywish participants worked as a group to identify 10 enduring goals they are setting for themselves.

1. I am a woman. Women are sacred.
2. I am valuable.
3. I deserve respect.
4. I shape my own future.
5. I will show kindness.
6. I am resilient.
7. I will seek help when I need it.
8. Drugs and alcohol do not make me strong.
9. I will support other girls in my community.
10. I am Native. I am loved.



One of a program's central pieces can become a final, end of unit or project activity the girls develop as a group. Enduring goals of a program or project evolve from the discussions in group, and are identified by participants as goals they want to uphold in their lives, outside of the program.

Useful Tip: Goals for the Road

Participants can create a list of goals they agree to commit to as they leave the unit or program. The enduring goals can be digitized by the Facilitator and given to the girls to decorate and take home with them.



Building Resilience

- Resilience is a process
- Resilience can begin at an early age
- Resilience can be supported in many different ways

American Indian girls are conditioned by multiple factors to develop resilience. Resilience is often defined as a person's ability to "positively adapt or achieve success despite having faced traumatic situations— being abused or neglected, witnessing violence, or living in poverty— that could lead to negative outcomes such as delinquency" (Kaplan, 2005).

Girls' group participants, of all ages, have had many different difficult experiences. As developing girls and young women, girls' programs can offer activities and bring in speakers and guests who offer skills, guidance and a receptive ear as they help participants enhance their resilience.

Resilience in girls can be exemplified in attributes that include:

- an ability to seek a positive mentor to talk about an event
- an ability to go to school or finish an assignment after experiencing a difficult situation
- attending girls' group after an event has occurred
- an ability to communicate feelings to others in the group
- an ability to show empathy to others who have experienced similar life events



Another Level of Support

After about a year of receiving feedback from the group, the Yawaywish Facilitator connected with a licensed therapist who began to work with the group on a regular basis. The Facilitator learned girls were experiencing trauma in different and significant ways. Through the use of group sessions, the girls were given the opportunity to learn positive coping skills, have questions answered, and acquire response strategies they could use in the future.



Yawaywish Tip:

Positive members can be drawn from

- Indian Health Clinic
- Strong, upstanding community member
- Older, responsible youth
- Professional counselor
- School district professionals
- Sports coach

Facilitator Reflection

- Monitor progress of participants
- Self-evaluation
- Evaluate success of materials or themes
- Make any adjustments needed in program

{commentary}

Yawayish Facilitator Reflection:

The Facilitator created weekly journals to document her progress through units and activities with girls. She used them to gauge her group's progress. With three groups, there was a lot of information to recall! The following is an example from a weekly journal.

Group Ages 10-13:

The topic for the week was "Our Friendship & A True Friend." Girls were asked to fill out a questionnaire and rank friend qualities listed from 1-15, from the most important quality to the least important. As a group we read through the list to make sure everyone understood the concept and then girls individually filled out their forms. We moved into discussion about what the girls ranked as most important and least important and other qualities that were not listed but they felt were important in friends and friendship. Each of the girls felt honesty was very important, and valued how much friends listen to a person when she has problems. The girls completed an "Am I a Good Friend" survey, which covered 20 questions including "Do you talk about your friends behind their back?" When finished, girls were asked if they learned anything new about themselves, and they each discovered they felt their friends were annoying sometimes, and admitted they had participated in gossiping online and denying it.

Facilitator's Note:

"Surveys and questionnaires can and should be customized for your individual group. Incorporate questions specific to issues your youth are facing within your community. It is important integrate into program development as it gives programs an idea of the way a program needs to go. Try to allow time for reflection after these activities in order to allow girls to share with the group to learn from, understand, and encourage each other. The girls liked the surveys very much and were more comfortable answering as a group, rather than on an individual basis at times."

There are many factors that influence the success of a group. The participants have to be open to learning and change, materials should support the information being shared, and the activities should reinforce the lessons being taught.

Programs are living organisms and are always affected by the individuals in attendance and outside pressures. It is important for a Facilitator to reflect upon her groups when a day is over, in order to consider how an activity worked, how the participants responded, and what things she needs to consider for next time. In such a way, units can remain flexible and useful, and students can receive relevant and timely responses to issues that arise in the group. Through reflection, the Facilitator can more accurately gauge a groups' needs for the future.

Useful Tip: Documentation

Journals, note taking, and dictation are useful ways for a Facilitator to monitor the progress of her program.



Gatherings and Conferences

- Increasing exposure to others is an important social development tool
- Sharing cultures and practices builds leadership skills
- Sharing with others fosters new friendships

Annual retreats or group team-building events are excellent ways to build strength and trust among members of girls' groups. They are often successful when participants are taken outside of their everyday environment to meet the challenge of a new environment, together.

Interacting with others is one of the most significant ways for girls groups to learn about themselves. Informal gatherings and conferences can each be instrumental in exposing participants to other groups. Both offer an opportunity to help girls develop their personal communication, leadership, and team building skills. With culture-based leadership, girls can acquire and share Tribal language and cultural resources that they can use to educate themselves, their families and friends.

When girls see other girls getting excited about something, sharing a new practice or information, they are more likely to embrace the new idea!



Culture Sharing, Teaching and Learning the Yawaywish Way:

Visiting other programs and groups, sharing culture and language is foundational to the growth of the La Jolla girls. The Yawaywish group formed a special contact with an indigenous Hawaiian group, the Na' Pea organization. The two groups communicated over the spring, and with the help of OJJDP Tribal Youth Program funding, created a cultural exchange program. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Yawaywish girls to get out of their comfort zone in their rural California mountain desert, and travel to a tropical climate.

The girls shared Luiseño cultural teachings, had language lessons and brought traditional art-making materials to share with the youth from Na' Pea in Kona, Hawaii. A traditional Hawaiian sailing-based youth group, the Na' Pea organization shared ocean sailing, Hawaiian history and language, and the process of historical trail preservation with Yawaywish. New languages were learned, and friendships were made which continue today!



The Yawaywish Girls Conference – A Tribal Girls' Conference Model

La Jolla hosts an annual Girls' Conference to celebrate the achievements and progress of the girls over the year of programming. The Yawaywish Conference opens its doors to girls from Tribes across the Southern California region, and usually brings up to 150 participants for two and half days of celebration, workshops, team building, leadership training and cultural education.

It is important for Yawaywish girls to have an opportunity to meet and learn from interactions with girls from different Tribal nations as they learn to appreciate their similarities and differences. The annual hallmark of the group's achievements, the Yawaywish conference is an event that highlights the lessons learned and celebrates the achievements the girls make over the course of a year.



Conference Recommendations

The following information details the planning that went into developing a successful conference. The Yawaywish Girls' Code requires girls to have a strong attendance record in order to participate in any team building exercises for the Yawaywish Summer Girls' Conference. All participants and chaperones must complete and submit a registration packet and safety waiver before participation in a conference.

Conference Planning:

- 1. Location, Location, Location!** – The location is key in establishing the right type of atmosphere for the conference. Girls can have a lot of energy, loud voices, and keep everyone on their toes! Hotels offer more of a formal atmosphere and participants must be quiet in sessions and rooms. An important component to conference planning however, hotels offer catered food thereby reducing the pressure of finding food for participants. Because of the rural mountainous setting, La Jolla opted for an outdoor camp setting instead of a hotel setting for the conference. Girls could not only experience camping (many for the first time), but could be as loud as they wanted without fear of disturbing other groups. Food was catered in from a local mobile Tribal caterer.
- 2. Identify a Conference Theme** – When planning the conference it is important to choose a guiding theme. The theme then helps guide the speakers and workshops which fill the agenda. La Jolla Yawaywish conference themes always revolved around positive reinforcement and strategic decision making. Yawaywish themes included “Responsibility, Respect and Boundaries” and “United As One.” The third and final conference was a reflection of the past four years, as well as a consideration of how our girls want to proceed in their futures, and was embodied in the reflection: “Women are Sacred: Our Past, Present and Futures.”
- 3. Form a Planning Committee** – A conference event can become a large undertaking and include many details, depending on the number of attendees and the goals of the conference. It is important to gain the support of community members and other Tribes or organizations in the area that are interested in participating and can help with organizing and dividing responsibilities. A planning committee can help the conference development stay on a timely schedule, plan and maintain a budget, and assist with any creative or problem solving work needed.
- 4. Procure Donations** – It is important to offer small gifts or “goodie bags” for girls who attend. It is always important to use the community to acquire donations, but start early. La Jolla likes to procure donations from local stores as well as larger businesses, but learned to plan ahead! Businesses often need a little lead time to gather materials. If the budget allows, it is nice to provide T-shirts or tank tops and any other items the girls can use for the conference. Girls can take gifts with them to remember their experiences, and help foster a feeling of belonging even after the event is over.

Some examples of conference gifts can include:

- Flip flops
- Sunglasses
- Journals
- Water bottles (use them during them the conference to cut down on plastic waste!)
- Cinch bags

Use Your Volunteers!

Yawaywish always had a tight budget for conferences. Community members were asked make gourds or other cultural gifts to help the budget. Volunteers created themed gift baskets (movies, spa day, and more) for the community member helpers and chaperones.

{commentary}

Dive into Details!

Yawaywish Tip:

Yawaywish learned to always review the theme and the expectations of a session with each presenter who was working with the conference. During the first conference, La Jolla did not review the materials one of the presenters brought to the conference beforehand. When the presentation was given, the video content was too mature for the youngest group of participants.

Yawaywish Tip:

Yawaywish invited Bird Dancers and traditional basket makers to share their skill and knowledge with girls. Girls learned different styles of dancing, beadwork and weaving, relevant to Tribes in the region. It is important to explain the differences between practices to expand girls' cultural knowledge and appreciation of other Native Tribes.



5. Choose the Right Emcee and Presenters – It is important to remember that a conference can get long, and most youth have a hard time sitting for an extended period of time. Tribes are encouraged to consider speakers and presenters who exhibit the following:

- Integrate Tribal culture into presentation
- Use technology in their presentation
- Exhibit energy and enthusiasm – they need to be fun!
- Are relatable and demonstrate empathy with girls
- Have a strong track record of interaction with young people
- Use breakout sessions with group exercises and discussion
- Have a clear goals for the presentation

6. Remember Presenter Gifts – Tribes strongly believe in sharing resources and acknowledging help from others. Yawaywish always made a commitment to sharing gifts with the individuals who gave their love, time, and energy to their girls. Gift cards, handmade items, and letters from participants are always a good choice.

7. Choose the right activities - All activities should reinforce the theme and goals of the conference. Groups can vary activities and seated sessions so participants are not sitting for extended periods of time. Yawaywish invites different Tribal Reservations and groups to the conferences each year, and finds healthy activities, group sports, and team building exercises great ways to help girls get to know one another and learn to work together as they progress through conference activities.



Guidelines for a Girls Conference:

Expectations and behavior guidelines are shared with the girls and chaperones on the first day of the conference. Groups should remember that accidents can always happen, and should have a clear line of communication among staff in the case of an emergency. Emergency numbers and information should be made readily available to staff and chaperones at the beginning of the event.

Sample Conference Code of Conduct:

- 1) We respect each other and one another's property.
- 2) We must listen. Neglecting to be respectful of the staff, presenters, and volunteers will not be tolerated and can result in being asked to leave.
- 4) We must always use respectful language, we do not use inappropriate language or gestures.
- 5) We always let chaperones know where we are and we always travel with a partner at the conference.

The following are sample conference offenses calling for immediate removal from conference. Parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child. If no parent can be reached, the chaperone will take the young women home:

- 1) We have zero tolerance for bullying, BOTH verbal and physical.
- 2) Young women should never engage in physical contact – We keep hands to ourselves.
- 3) Vandalism, abuse, misuse, or defacing of any facility, property or individual is not allowed.
- 4) The use or possession of tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs is prohibited.
- 5) Straying to unauthorized areas, is prohibited; we must remain at the conference at all times.

Failure to abide by the rules will result in the following:

- 1) Participant will be given a verbal warning.
- 2) Parents/guardians will be called to come and pick up their youth from the conference.



Share Your Program Pride!

Yawaywish Tip:

Use Newsletters!

Don't Forget! A Tribal newsletter or mail out is a great way to share the successes of your program and conference! Share the news, images and any other information with the community – it will boost the positive impact of the hard work you do!

{commentary}





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Program Evaluation

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“You get to know about girls in your community. It helps make me not as nervous when I talk to people I don’t know on the Reservation.”

- Participant, La Jolla Yawaywish Group

A data collection plan helps programs identify the data they need to gather to understand the needs of participants, to plan appropriate activities and to support the strategies or overall objectives identified by a program. Then, as the program continues, it can create an ongoing data collection plan in order to gauge participants' progress in the program.

"Whenever I had something to say I could say it, without being judged." - Participant, La Jolla Yawaywish Group

Why Evaluate?

- Gather information on participants
- Gauge progress of activities, staff, volunteers and participants
- Set expectations for next stage
- Assess participant knowledge
- Identify and avoid potential problems
- Document a condition or issue in the community
- Create a track record of program success
- Gather data for reporting to Tribe and interested audiences
- Retain data for use in future funding opportunities

Useful Tip:

Evaluations can be as detailed or simple as they need to be, and programs can evaluate only as much as they want to. Some groups may only want to gauge the participants' knowledge or progress in a program, while others may want to gather information for a larger study or program plan.

Pre-program data on Tribal youth can be gathered before the program in surveys, through existing or past Tribal groups or programs, from local health providers or other Tribe-serving agencies, local school districts, program partners, or in gatherings that Tribes feel are appropriate for their community. Identified resources can then be used throughout the program as the need arises (See strategic plan on attached CD).

Concurrent data gathering can include evaluations of program content, participant knowledge, personal experience and perceptions of program, and satisfaction with a unit or specific content. Evaluations can measure staff and volunteer efforts, gauge the success of activities and measure output data. Gathering feedback and data through ongoing evaluations is helpful in gauging how participants are responding to materials and activities, what their satisfaction level is with an aspect of a program, and what needs need to be addressed. A quick online evaluation resource that explains the benefits and drawbacks of different evaluation tools can be found at <http://www.ngcproject.org/sites/default/files/Evaluation%20data%20collection%20tools.pdf>.

Evaluations can occur at various stages of a program. It may be helpful to consider program inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes as areas that can supply data that points to the success or needs of a program (Mattessich Hendricks and Roholt. *Information Gold Mine: Innovative Uses of Evaluation*, 17).

Definitions:

- ✓ **Indicators:** Behaviors or patterns a group seeks to address
- ✓ **Inputs:** the resources a program uses to carry out its activities
- ✓ **Activities:** the actual work or services of a program
- ✓ **Outputs:** measure the accomplishments, products, or service units of a program
- ✓ **Outcomes:** changes that occur in people, policies, or something else as a result of a program's activities

Indicators and Outcomes

Creating outcomes helps programs identify places in the program where evaluative measures can be taken. Indicators reveal negative behaviors or values that a group seeks to address. By identifying them, groups can determine what kinds of outcomes they wish to see at the end of a project or program.

The following indicators and anticipated outcomes can be developed by a girls group.

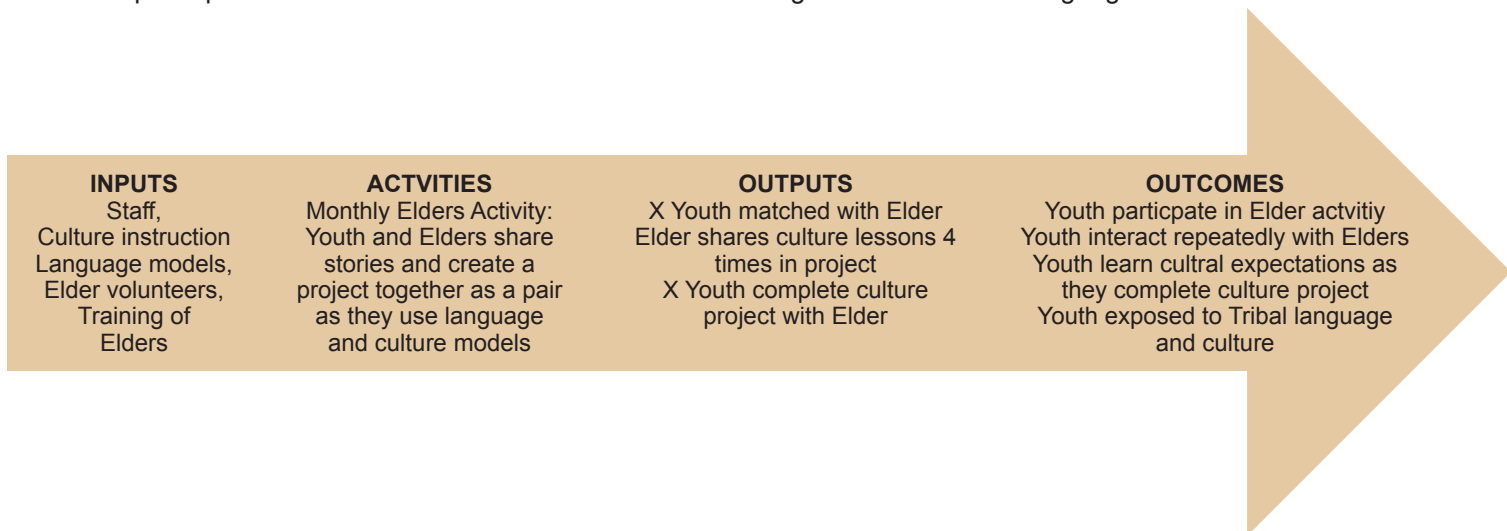
Indicators

- X number of Youth do not have positive role models on the Reservation
- X number of Youth do not have identified Elders to interact with
- X number of Youth do not have knowledge of expected roles and behaviors in the Tribal community
- X number of Youth are unaware of traditional Tribal language and culture

Outcomes

- X number of Youth are enrolled in girls' – Elder cultural mentoring activity
- X number of Youth interact with an Elder mentor once a month
- X number of Youth demonstrate increased knowledge of how risk behaviors work against Tribal cultural expectations
- X number of Youth demonstrate improved understanding of Tribal language and culture

A girls group's inputs, activities, and outputs are supported by the resources and exercises a group uses to connect their inputs with their desired outcomes. The example below briefly describes an Elder activity, with the outcome of helping X number of participants work with an Elder to learn cultural knowledge and some Tribal language.



Bringing it Together:

A program's plan to collect data can then be revealed through the identification of desired activities, outputs and outcomes. In each area, data can be gathered in interviews, research, surveys and discussions to gauge the need and progress of participants.



Tips for Creating and Using Surveys

Many programs find surveys helpful in gauging participants' responses to information or activities. Responses reflect the desired outcomes of a program, and help in the measurement of change in program indicators. The following offer a few suggestions in creating successful survey experiences.

1. Know the age and level of comprehension of your audience and create your survey with your audience in mind.
2. Keep your survey as short as possible – only ask for information you really need.
3. Consider how you are going to analyze the data and how much time you have. It can influence the type of questions you ask.
4. Use closed-ended questions whenever possible. Closed-ended questions are usually more straightforward and offer choices for respondents. Too many open-ended questions may reduce the quality of the answers respondents offer.
5. Avoid adding a comments area at the end of each section or question, unless you have time for additional analysis.
6. Divide your survey into sections by themes and, if possible, keep question format consistent.
7. Proofread your survey! Have someone else proofread your survey.
8. Test or pilot your survey with someone of a similar intended audience age. This will let you know if your respondents understand the meaning and content of your questions, and that your directions are clear.
9. Thank respondents at the end of the survey in a meaningful way, e.g., “Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey, your input will help shape future girls' programs.”

(From the 2008 Puget Sound Center for Teaching Learning and Technology)



Evaluations Useful for Yawaywish:

Because Yawaywish was funded through the Department of Justice, the program wanted to monitor the progress of its girls over three years. The Program Director brought in a professional Evaluator in the first year of the program. After looking through all the materials, content, group activities and the participant base, the Evaluator noted a high level of evaluation was not feasible for Yawaywish. Because of the small number of girls -- 40-50 over the course of the program -- and because of the varying attendance rates, longitudinal evaluations were not ideal for the program.

The Facilitator worked with the Program Director to create different kinds of surveys, administered before and after units were shared with the girls to offer information on the progress and interest of girls with specific topics and content. Their program journal responses and unit surveys offered the program the data and feedback needed to gauge how the girls were responding to the content, what each participants' progress looked like, and what the girls did and did not like. These helped the program gauge how girls were doing in the program as it went along.

Yawaywish Tip:

General survey data can be shared with parents and guardians, school teachers or other individuals involved with participants. Remember to never include participant names, and respect the anonymity of responses.

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References and Group Materials

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