



CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Intended Audience:

- 4-H Club members, leaders and parents

Learning Objectives:

4-H Club members, leaders and parents will:

- Discover what they can do to create a welcoming environment in their 4-H club
- View get-acquainted activities as an important part of a welcoming environment
- Consider strategies to help members get better acquainted
- See “Dynamic Duos” as a way for developing relationships between youth of different ages, genders or schools

Target Essential Elements:

A welcoming environment increases member’s sense of *belonging* in their 4-H club.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Supplies Needed:

4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos) Activity

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Handout

Feeling Comfortable in Our 4-H Club Activity

- Pens or pencils
- “Belonging” section of the Wisconsin 4-H Community Club Feedback Form

BACKGROUND

Most 4-H members, volunteers and parents sit next to people they know when they come to a 4-H meeting or activity. Today, we’re going to get better acquainted with others in our club. You’ll be part of a “dynamic duo” or pair. We’ve paired up members of different ages who might go to different schools and live in different areas.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: 4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos)

(Tell club members who will be DD’s, i.e., paired up. As you read their names have them sit next to each other in chairs or on the floor. If possible, notice members that are absent before the activity starts and make adjustments in the partner assignments. Give each member the “4-H Dynamic Duos Partner Questionnaire,” and a pen or pencil.)

In this activity you will be working in pairs. The older partner will first ask the younger member the questions and take notes. The younger partner will then interview the older partner and make notes of their answers. We will then go around the room and you will each share something interesting that your partner said. We’ll then collect the questionnaires for use later in the year.



Getting Better Acquainted = More Friendly Club Environment

It’s difficult to feel comfortable in a group when you don’t know people well. What are some things that the club can do throughout the year to help us get better acquainted?

- Get acquainted activities or icebreakers
- Roll calls that ask questions about our interests
- Small groups or committees that are mixed by age, school or gender
- Continue the 4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos) for a year

(Options: Present how the DD’s might work in your club. Revise the handout, “Dynamic Duos in the Coming Year,” to fit your club.)

Activity: Feeling Comfortable in Our Club

(Hand out the “Belonging” section of the “Wisconsin 4-H Community Club Feedback Form” available at www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/clubs/meetings.cfm to all members, parents and volunteers. Give out more pens or pencils if needed.) Fill out this section without putting your name on it. Fold the feedback form in half and give it to one of the officers for later. The results will be compiled to determine areas where our club is doing well and areas where we need more work.

Handouts

- 4-H Dynamic Duos Partner Questionnaire
- Dynamic Duos in the Coming Year
- Ways to Say “Good for You!”
- Belonging section of the Wisconsin 4-H Community Club Feedback Form
- Evaluation

Do Ahead:

- Meet with club officers to discuss Dynamic Duo idea and determine partners.
- Have supplies and handouts ready.
- Recruit someone to record the reflection discussion to use as an evaluation (optional).

Sources:

- Created by Linda Kustka, Professor Emeritus, Department of Youth Development, UW-Extension.
- Trisha Day and Greg Lampe, “4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos)” in “Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups,” COMMO7, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*, Department of 4-H Youth Development, UW-Extension.
- Wisconsin 4-H Community Clubs “Feedback Form” at www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/clubs/meetings.cfm.

More Ideas to Make Our Club Welcoming

It’s important that we support each other as we learn and do new things. Each member will be doing some things for the first time. Some “firsts” might include: being an officer, going to camp, making something, giving a talk or participating in a county activity. Share with each other how these new experiences went. Tell each other when things go well. Here is a handout called “Ways to Say ‘Good for You.’”

Closing

Your reactions to this session help us evaluate its effectiveness. Please take the time now to complete this short evaluation.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- What were the benefits of doing the Dynamic Duo Partner Questionnaire?
- What will you remember about your partner?

Apply:

- What kinds of get-acquainted activities should we do in the future?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY

Enhance:

Here are some tips from 4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos) of the “Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups,” COMMO7, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*:

- Consider having your club officers and youth leaders take the responsibility for introducing the “Dynamic Duo” idea to the rest of the club. Suggest that they put together a presentation about how bad it feels to be excluded and why it’s important for the club to be a friendly and welcoming place.
- Concerned that some youth aren’t mature enough to follow through with the responsibility of being assigned to be a DD partner? Asking youth to volunteer might be a better option. You might try out the DD idea with this teaching plan. Then, you could ask for volunteers and re-assign those willing to be partners.
- Everyone can be part of a Dynamic Duo! You don’t have to wait until there are new members in a club to start having fun with this activity. (Note: This activity was originally written to pair new members with older, experienced members.) In fact, there are some distinct advantages to making sure that everyone in the club belongs to a Dynamic Duo. For one thing, it’s a good way to break up any “cliques” that may be forming and get kids to branch out and spend some time with other people. Being part of a Dynamic Duo is a great way for youth to discover things that they have in common with someone they might not get to know otherwise.
- One way to get Dynamic Duos going in a club where there are no new members is to have everyone draw someone else’s name. Or you may prefer putting the pairs together yourself by matching youth with similar interests, experiences, hobbies or lifestyles. It’s probably best to avoid having youth select their own Dynamic Duo partner because chances are they’ll pick someone they already know quite well.

Have someone compile the results from the “Belonging” part of the Wisconsin 4-H Community Club Feedback Form. Bring the results to a meeting of the club officers and organizational volunteers. Look at club strengths and areas that may need some work. Discuss ways to improve these areas.

Simplify:

- If you have less time, omit the “Feeling Comfortable in Our Club” activity.

EVALUATION

It is important to use an evaluation that is consistent with your teaching objectives. The short evaluation in the handouts can be modified to meet your needs. An alternative to a written evaluation is to record the Reflection discussion under “Talk It Over.” Recruit someone ahead of time to take notes while you are leading the discussion. Remember to share the evaluation results with 4-H Youth Development Extension staff in your county.

ADDITIONAL WEB LINKS

- The Illinois Extension 4-H web site has a discussion and tips on physically and emotionally safe environments at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/4hfacts/pyd00.html.
- The Minnesota Extension 4-H web site has helpful club management tools. You’ll find “Ways to Say Good for You,” “Sample 4-H Reflection Activities,” “Examples of 4-H Club Ceremonies,” and more in the Minnesota 4-H Club Management Guide at www.fourh.umn.edu/downloads/4HMG/toolkit.html.

***Finalized by the Strengthening 4-H Club Leadership Work Team:
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4-H Dynamic Duos Partner Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Grade:

Birthday:

1. How did you find out about 4-H and why did you want to join the club?
2. What are some things you're looking forward to doing in this 4-H club?
3. What do you like to do in your spare time?
4. Who is someone you admire and why?
5. What is something that makes you really mad?
6. What is something most people are surprised to discover about you?
7. What are your favorite things?

Color _____	Sport _____
Food _____	Movie _____
TV show _____	Place to go _____

8. What was the name of your first pet?

Adapted from "4-H DD's (Dynamic Duos)" of "Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups," COMMO7, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*, Department of 4-H Youth Development, UW-Extension.

Dynamic Duos in the Coming Year

Here are some ideas for the Dynamic Duo partners to have fun while supporting each other:

- Sit together. Find out how the other person would answer roll call and give their answer.
- Present a team demonstration.
- Lead a game together.
- Be in charge of bringing a treat to the meeting
- Work together on a club project or activity.
- Remind each other of dates and times for meetings and special 4-H activities.
- Work on record books together.
- Send birthday cards to each other.
- Let the other person know if one person can't make it to the next meeting.
- The older member gives the younger member tips on things that will be new experiences (e.g., camp, new project, fair).

Adapted from "4-H DD's (Dynamic Duos)" of "Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups," COMMO7, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*, Department of 4-H Youth Development, UW-Extension.

Ways to Say “Good for You!”

Being positive is an effective teaching technique. If you believe people “can,” they will think so, too! If members believe they “can,” they “will.” Emphasize the positive by using some of the following:

- ☺ You really out-did yourself today.
- ☺ This kind of work pleases me very much.
- ☺ Congratulations!
- ☺ That’s right. Good for you.
- ☺ Terrific!
- ☺ I bet your mom (dad) would be proud to see the job you did on this.
- ☺ Beautiful!
- ☺ Good job!
- ☺ Excellent work!
- ☺ I appreciate your help.
- ☺ Very good. Will you show the group?
- ☺ Thank you for (sitting down, being quiet, getting right to work, etc.).
- ☺ That’s an interesting point of view.
- ☺ You’ve got it now.
- ☺ Nice going.
- ☺ Marvelous!
- ☺ You’re on the right track.
- ☺ That’s top quality work.
- ☺ That’s really nice.
- ☺ Thank you very much.
- ☺ That’s an interesting way of looking at it.
- ☺ I like the way the group has settled down.
- ☺ Keep it up.
- ☺ Wow!
- ☺ That’s great!
- ☺ I like the way you’re working.
- ☺ Keep up the good work.
- ☺ I’m very proud of the way you worked (are working) today.
- ☺ Everyone’s working so hard.
- ☺ That’s quite an improvement.
- ☺ Much better!
- ☺ It’s a pleasure to be with you.
- ☺ What neat work.
- ☺ That looks like it’s going to be a great (report, project, talk, exhibit, etc.).
- ☺ It looks like you put a lot of work into this.
- ☺ That’s clever.
- ☺ Very creative!
- ☺ Very interesting!
- ☺ Good thinking!
- ☺ Now you’ve figured it out.
- ☺ That’s a good point.
- ☺ That’s a very good observation.
- ☺ That certainly is one way of looking at it.
- ☺ That’s coming along nicely.

Source: *Toolkit – Minnesota 4-H Club Management Guide* at www.fourh.umn.edu/downloads/4HMG/toolkit.html.

Creating a Welcoming Environment

Evaluation

1. How useful will this information be to help your club plan fun experiences for members?
(Circle one response.)

Very Useful Somewhat UsefulNot SureNot Useful

2. Do you feel better prepared to plan fun activities for the club?

Yes No

3. What will you do as a result of this program?