

# PEACE POWER TOOLS

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## *Activity Sampling*

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### **Summary:**

Many children and youth, and quite a few adults as well, have had limited exposure in their lives to a variety of potentially fulfilling and rewarding activities, activities for which they may have particular talents, or activities that they can participate in that will result in recognition from others. Activity sampling is simply making an implementing a plan to provide exposure to a wide range of activities, with the hope and expectation that some may be of interest to the youth (or adult).

### **Resources Needed:**

- Depend on activity

### **Implementation Steps:**

Often the only way to identify fulfilling and rewarding activities is to experiment. Youth will often need encouragement and accompaniment to begin this experimentation.

- Youth can often, individually or collectively, and with some help, develop a rich menu of possible activities to experiment with, and developing such a list is a useful first step
- Staff can develop extensive lists of possibilities, based on observations of activities that have worked for other youth, that can serve as one source of ideas
- Youth can then be asked to review extensive lists of activities to identify those that might be of interest to them
- Trips, tours, visits by or to adults involved in a wide range of activities can broaden youth exposure. Many kinds of enrichment experience can contribute, including arts; sports; educational experiences at colleges, universities, and museums; visits to job sites; conference attendance; political activities; outdoor and other recreational activities; and other creative ideas developed locally
- Group discussions among young people related to what they each find rewarding may produce ideas that will work for other participants
- In all cases, an emphasis on experimentation that validates youth's choice to participate should be present

### **Variations:**

It is often easier for young people to attempt something new if they do it with one or more peers; youth can therefore be encouraged to identify a friend that might accompany them at least in the beginning.

### **Rationale and Evidence Base:**

Given the limited experience of many youth and adults, it is often difficult for them to choose fulfilling activities. Opportunities to experiment with novel activities, therefore, have been used in many studies since the 1960s, as well as in many well-established youth development programs. Rewarding activities once sampled can offer alternatives to less desirable current behaviors (see Finding a Passion module).

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