

PEACE POWER TOOLS

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Practice Giving and Receiving Recognition

Summary:

Modeling and rehearsal are well-established approaches for teaching appropriate and changing inappropriate social behaviors. One important set of skills in PEACE POWER projects is giving recognition (praise, compliments, thanks) to others effectively; a critical reciprocal skill is *receiving* recognition appropriately, without turning it into a joke or minimizing it. Both are important, as youth will continue to give recognition only if they receive an appropriate response when they do so. Both giving and receiving recognition graciously are necessary in Recognition Circles.

Resources Needed:

- None

Implementation Steps:

- Divide youth into pairs.
- Have each member of a pair write down a positive behavior that s/he has observed in his or her partner.
- One pair then faces each other, and take turns looking at the other person (as appropriate to the culture[s] involved) and respectfully and directly make a recognition statement
- The partner then responds directly and respectfully (e.g., by looking at the other and saying, "thank you").
- Others in the circle are given an opportunity to state what they liked about how the pair did, and may suggest ways to improve how they communicated and received recognition.
- After the process for each pair is completed, the process moves to the next pair.
- If time allows, partners can be changed and the exercise repeated.

Variations:

- More elaborate modeling and rehearsal approaches involve role-playing of sample situations. Allow youth to participate extensively in the preparation of sample situations, as their scenarios are likely to be more realistic. Some example scenarios are:
 - One of two friends just successfully completed a school assignment that has been giving him a lot of trouble. What would his friend say? What would he say in return?
 - Two kids are talking on the bus. One of them just talked two younger kids into setting a disagreement peacefully. What would those two friends say to each other?
 - A teacher just gave a young woman a very positive job reference and she got the job. The next time she sees him, what do they say?
- Be sure to pay special attention to both expressing recognition and acknowledging recognition gracefully, rather than arrogantly or with false humility.
- Because young people tend to enjoy watching themselves, videotaping rehearsal and modeling exercises can be quite effective. Videotaping gives youth an unlimited number of opportunities to watch themselves and make refinements to their behavior.

Rational and Evidence Base:

There is considerable evidence that modeling and rehearsal skills training approaches are very effective behavior modification techniques. Modeling and rehearsal are part of a compound of social skills necessary for interpersonal functioning. There is evidence that poor social skill competence as a child can set the stage for social deviance in adulthood.

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Social skills training that involves modeling and rehearsal in conjunction with coaching and feedback has been shown to be more effective than approaches that use rehearsal, coaching and feedback alone. Research shows that non-verbal elements of social skills are subtler than verbal ones. Therefore, some type of demonstration or modeling is required to help improve the "style" that behavior is delivered. Similar studies show that role-playing of realistic scenarios can facilitate skill transfer to real-life situations.

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