

Gathering Background Information on an Issue (Research Days)

Objective: To determine the type of information needed for the issue
To find information about chosen issue
To begin the process of inquiry, research, and reflection

Time: 1-5 sessions

How Many: 30 Youth

Materials: Access to computers with Internet access, copies of the *Research Worksheets*, and several pieces of chart paper.

Facilitator's Note: The research phase can easily take several days or a week, depending on your information. If you have already done some research or have materials, let youth use them—don't wait for them to FIND them. Also, your youth may need to repeat this activity at different stages—once to get initial information and again later when you have refined your issue or potential action.

If you have access to a librarian, meet with them beforehand to see if they know of resources. Youth might be able to get information through calling agencies from the Adolescent Health Providers Guide, or other local agencies.

Enroll: Brainstorm a list of what they want to know about this issue.
Brainstorm questions for youth to find answers to: How have others addressed this issue? Who is most affected by this? Who else is working on this? What are local resources about this issue? What are the laws or procedures about changing this issue? What are the facts?

Do/Experience: Provide youth with access to computers. Youth can work individually or in pairs. Each group should have several *Research Worksheets* to fill out.

Here are some categories of how to divide up the work

- Answers to specific questions from the Enroll.
- Information at different levels (local, state, national, international)
- Statistics.
- Case studies.
- History of the issue. How did it get to be this way?
- Laws that relate to the issue.
- Which leaders or decision-makers need to be talked to, in order to change the issue.
- Research what other communities are doing to deal with the issue.
- Discover what other groups of young people are doing with this issue. What obstacles did they encounter? What successes did they have?

Process: (*This might be on a second day.)
Was it easy or hard to find information?
How could you tell if it was reliable information?
Does it seem like this is still an important issue in our community?
Does this seem like an important issue in other communities, the state, the nation, and the world?

Label: As we figure out what to do with this issue, we need to know what information is already out there. This information will help us better understand how hard or easy it will be to address our issue. As we work to change this issue, we will continue this process of asking questions, finding information and reflecting.

Demonstrate: On chart paper, write the research categories that you chose in the Do/Experience (one category per paper).

Each group should present THE BEST of what they found to the rest of the class. (Don't let students talk about ALL the details of their research at this time). As they give information, add it to the chart paper. After each group has shared, everyone should add any additional information to the chart papers.

Ask:

In which categories do we have lots of information/resources?
In what areas do we still need information/resources?

Review: From what we've learned, what NEW questions do we have?

Celebrate: Everyone share one bit of information they gathered that they think really helps the issue.

Research Worksheet

Name: _____

Source:

Notes:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 highest)...

How useful is this info? _____

How reliable is this info? _____

How relevant is this info? _____

BEST info from this source:
