Idea Sheet

GROPPING WITH GROUPS by Thomas Riese
Associate Professor
Department of Youth Development
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Waukesha County

SITUATION

As participants in the 4-H program, teens are involved in many group activities. These activities may be conducted through a county wide older youth group, or through the local club. As these teens work together, there are often situations which arise, due to the make up and dynamics within the group. Leadership styles, communications and group norms are often central issues of concern.

To assist teens in understanding these situations, leadership styles, group personalities, and group dynamics were focused upon in the "gropping with groups activity." This experience has been used at a teen winter camp involving youth from three counties, as well as county camp counselor training, and at a statewide camp resource counselors workshop.

OBJECTIVES ARE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO ACQUIRE:

An understanding of various personalities exhibited by groups
An understanding of the feelings held by individuals as they confront a group.
An awareness of different leadership behavior used in group situations.

METHODS:

Size: Works best for 12-18 participants
Time: Allow 40 minutes plus discussion (dependent on participants).
Process: 1. As people arrive have them count off: 1, 2, 3 and 4. This number will correspond to their involvement in group role playing situations. From group 1 select people to assume the leadership role, and select people to assume the approaching group role if there is to be one. Have the approaching group leave. Everyone left is part of the group. Clarify all roles.

2. After each group interaction experience check for feelings. Then present one piece of the information from "Subject Outline." Allow the group to react. Urge them to comment on their group experience as it relates to the piece of material you present to them. As the discussion dies down, move on to the next group experience.

3. Possible questions to encourage discussion are listed after each group experience.

4. When situation 1 is completed, go to 2. Select the leader and approaching group from those people who were "2". Continue as before.

CONCLUSIONS:

In using this activity with the teens and adults present as chaperones, participants became very open and visibly interested. Many personal situations were shared. Participants would reflect upon their interaction with adult volunteers, other teenagers, and school teachers. The participants sharing of other group situations, brought most of the groups very close, and greatly increased the value of the experience.

IMPLICATIONS:

The use of activities which emphasize leadership styles, group norms and pressures, in an objective way, can be of great benefit to 4-H teen members. The opportunity to react to the various group situations and leadership styles is of great potential value.

The value is finally dependent upon the leadership given by the participants. Each group member could learn and utilize the information for more creative leadership within his club or youth group.

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1 See Appendix 1 - 4 for outlines of the four group situations.
WHAT A GROUP IS:
Any number of people, who are thought of together and are consciously or unconsciously directed to a common goal.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC NEEDS OF A GROUP:
Acceptance
Communication
Structure
Purpose

WHAT ARE THE ASPECTS OF A GROUP’S PERSONALITY:
Atmosphere
Communication Pattern
Participation Pattern
Leadership Pattern
Cohesiveness
Sub-Groups
Standards
History and Traditions

WHAT STYLE OF LEADERSHIP VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader's Authority</th>
<th>Tells</th>
<th>Sells</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Consults</th>
<th>Joins</th>
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<td>Group Freedom</td>
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GROUP 1

LEADER

No leader is to be identified. Everyone in the group is to be assumed of equal status.

GROUP

Stand in a circle arms chained together. You will only allow people with glasses to join (although many in your group don't have glasses). Contact lenses are acceptable. Those without glasses are not allowed in!

In this circle talk and laugh about anything. Including comments about those without glasses.
GROUP 2

LEADER

Be very task oriented - unconcerned about people's feelings. Get the group to pick up papers and clean up the room.

GROUP

As a group you are supposed to pick up. But you are more interested in sitting on the floor and talking with old friends. New members are "out of it" because they are not "old friends." Be rude if you must.

APPROACHING GROUP

Your job is to become part of the group. Do what you must, to be a part of this group of fun people.

QUESTIONS

1. How was the leader accepted?
2. Did this group have a purpose?
3. How did the leader feel about the group?
4. What feelings did the approaching group have about the leader? about the group?
5. How did the leader feel?
GROUP 3

LEADER

Be very, very friendly. Don't worry about the task, worry about everyone liking—you—and each other. You are supposed to arrange chairs in a circle (but you don't push them to work).

GROUP

You are old friends, but you really don't like the leader. New members are very, very welcome. Sit and talk with them.

APPROACHING GROUP

Your job is to become a part of this fun group of people. You have heard very nice things about the leader. Do whatever the leader says!

QUESTIONS

1. Did the leader get anything done?
2. Have you ever had a leader like this?
3. Have you ever noticed a group personality?
4. Should a leader's personality be the same as the group's(?)
GROUP 4

LEADER

Group is to socialize and talk - there is no task for them to do. Just enjoy each other and go along with the desires of the group.

GROUP

The group is friendly and well organized. You look toward the leader as a friend and leader. As a group you usually do some project. Encourage your leader to identify a project - such as leading a game. Accept new group willingly and urge their participation.

APPROACHING GROUP

You feel welcomed into the group. BUT, the only reason you are here is because there is nothing else to do, and your parents want you to be here! You could become bored very quickly!

QUESTIONS

1. How could the leader interest the "bored" kids?

2. What style was this leader?

3. What style of a leader are you?

4. Do you change in different groups?

5. What happens when the leader's style and the group's style are in conflict?