

Activity 1: Defining Leadership

What is leadership? There is no doubt that if you were to ask ten people this question, you would receive ten different responses. Not only do people have different opinions regarding what leadership is, but there are also many acceptable definitions of leadership. There are so many different traits and expectations of leaders that it would be impossible to define the term in a way that could adequately explain every leadership role. Several definitions of leadership from literature are included on the handout.

OBJECTIVES:

For youth to:

- create a definition of leadership.
- understand that leadership can be defined in many ways.
- become aware of others' views concerning leadership.
- discuss different aspects of leadership.
- summarize the most important parts of leadership.

LIFE SKILLS:

- Working with others.

MATERIALS:

- Index cards (one for every participant)
- Three different dictionaries
- Pens/pencils
- Copies of DEFINING LEADERSHIP Handout
- Flip chart
- Markers

TIME:

20 minutes

SETTING:

Comfortable room with tables and chairs.

DO

- Give participants index cards and ask them to write their individual definition of leadership.
- Have youth read their cards aloud. Point out the differences and similarities between the definitions as they are read.
- Give three volunteers the dictionaries and have them look up the word "leadership." Have them read the definitions out loud to show that even those definitions are different.
- Lead a discussion about the most important aspects of leadership. Using the dictionaries' definitions and those from the DEFINING LEADERSHIP handout, have participants come up with a group definition of leadership.

REFLECT

- What do you think is the most important part of being a leader? Did any personal values play a role in making up determining your definition of leadership?
- How did individual definitions of leadership differ? How were they the same?
- How did you determine which factors would be included in the group definition of leadership?
- What leadership skill is most common among group members? What are the common leadership weaknesses?

APPLY

- How can this definition of leadership serve as a focus for your group?
- Are you more aware of the different aspects of leadership? How will this help you in your search to learn about leadership?
- What are some of the qualities you possess that positively affect your leadership ability? Negatively affect your leadership ability?





DEFINING LEADERSHIP

“Leadership is a function of a group process rather than a series of traits residing in an individual.”

Diana Karol Nagy, UF

“To lead is to conduct by going first, to guide by influence, to direct, or to be the best among a group.”

Webster’s Dictionary

“Leadership is helping yourself and others achieve goals.”

Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow

“Leadership can be defined as helping and guiding others to reach a goal. Leading is not doing things for the group; it is helping the group decide what needs to be done and how it plans to do it.”

Leadership I

“Leadership is helping others find ways to achieve what they desire.”

Leadership I

“The long range goals of leadership include raising the level of member motivation, improving the quality of all decisions, developing teamwork and morale, furthering the individual development of members, and increasing the readiness to accept change.”

Youth Leadership and Group Effectiveness