Section Four: Evaluating Personal Development Programs

All of the tools in this section were developed by Dr. Susan Barkman and Krisanna Machtmes of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service (Indiana) and are a part of their Four Fold Youth Development Model. All of the tools are located on the Four Fold Youth Development Model web site (http://www.four-fold.purdue.edu/fourfold/) Permission for Florida’s county faculty to use the tools and web site was granted and encouraged by Dr. Barkman.

All of the four tools included in this toolkit are designed to measure behavior change using the same scale. The tools are set up as a series of statements to which the youth indicate how often they perform the action listed in each statement. The response scale is “Never,” “Rarely,” “Sometimes,” “Often,” and “Always.” Likewise, this tool is designed to be a pre and separate post-test that measures behavior change (i.e. Measures whether the youth are performing the actions more often after the program than they did prior to the program). Or, you can use this tool as a post test then post follow-up if possible. You would simply administer the tool at the end of the program, then wait six months and administer it again to the same youth. This would give more time for the behavior change to occur. In either case, once the youth complete the tools, the data is entered at the web site and the information is analyzed automatically.

The web site listed above provides detailed information on the Four Fold Model and the evaluation tools. There are also step by step instructions on using the tools, submitting the data and retrieving the report.

I. What is the Achieving Goals tool about?

The process of setting and achieving goals involves establishing benchmarks, monitoring progress, and utilizing feedback to achieve a targeted result. This tool consists of a series of 20 statements (four demographic questions for a total of 24 questions) that represent various actions that are necessary to achieve goals. The skill sets that the action statements reflect include:

1. Goal difficulty- setting realistic but challenging goals
2. Goal specificity- setting clear, specific goals
3. Participation in goal setting- strategies, self-monitoring, incentives
4. Feedback- getting advice and feedback from others

Objective: By the end of the 4-H year, X% of the Z youth will indicate more frequent use of practices effective in achieving goals such as putting goals in writing so he/she won’t lose his/her focus, setting deadlines to help him/her achieve goals, breaking goals down into steps so he/she can check progress, etc. (Or which ever you are focusing on).

Reporting: See web site

II. What is the Communication tool about?

Oral communication is the dynamic process by which people exchange thoughts, ideas, and messages. Listening is the act of interpreting sounds and/or visual stimuli and using those interpretations to give them meaning. This tool consists of a series of 25 statements (four demographic questions for a total of 29 questions) that represent various aspects of interpersonal communication, both verbal and nonverbal. The skill sets that the statements reflect include:

1. Awareness of one’s own styles of communication.
2. Understanding and valuing different styles of communication.
3. Practicing empathy.
4. Adjusting one’s own styles of communication to match others’ styles. (Communicative adaptability)
5. Communication of essential information.
6. Interaction management.

Objective: By the end of the 4-H year, X% of the Z youth will indicate more frequent use of effective communication practices such as maintaining eye contact with the person he/she is speaking with, rephrasing others’ comments to make sure he/she understands them, etc. (Or which ever you are focusing on).

Reporting: See web site
III. What is the Healthy Lifestyle Choices tool about?

Healthy Lifestyle Choices is the process of making a decision among possible alternatives or competing courses of action that affect your health. This tool consists of a series of 20 statements (four demographic questions for a total of 24 questions) that represent various aspects of healthy lifestyle choices and decision-making in general. The skill sets that the statements reflect include:

1. Generating options
2. Considering consequences
3. Evaluating decisions
4. Decision making efficacy

Objective: By the end of the 4-H year, X% of the Z youth will indicate more frequent use of effective decision making practices such as thinking of lots of possible choices, thinking about both good and bad results before making a decision, thinking about how decisions will affect his/her life in the future, etc. (Or which ever you are focusing on)

Reporting: See web site

IV. What is the Problem Solving tool about?

Solving problems is the process of using reasoning and analysis to look beyond the surface of a problem to the underlying concepts which need to be part of the solution. It is a process of recognizing and correctly defining problems, creating and implementing solutions, and evaluating the results of those solutions. This tool consists of a series of 30 statements (four demographic questions for a total of 34 questions) that represent various aspects of problem solving. More specifically, the skill sets that the statements reflect include:

1. Identify/define problem.
2. Analyze possible causes or assumptions.
3. Identify possible solutions.
4. Select best solution.
5. Implement solution.
6. Evaluate progress and revise as needed.

Objective: By the end of the 4-H year, X% of the Z youth will indicate more frequent use of effective problem solving practices such as getting all of the facts before attempting to solve a problem, comparing each possible solution with the others to find the best one to solve his/her problem, etc. (Or which ever you are focusing on)

Reporting: See web site