



SUPPORTING 4-H CLUB COMMITTEES

Intended Audience:

- Adults and youth providing 4-H Club leadership

Learning Objectives:

Club leaders will:

- Gain ideas on how to support club committees to be successful
- Understand their roles in supporting committees, such as “Committee Coach” or “Committee Advisor”

Target Essential Elements:

Independence is learned as committees assume responsibility for planning and carrying out tasks.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Supplies Needed:

What Are Successful Committees Like? Activity

- Flipchart and markers
- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

Ideas to Make This Happen Activity

- Flipchart and markers
- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

Handouts

- 4-H Committee Planning Sheet
- Supporting 4-H Club Committees Evaluation

Do Ahead:

- Write questions for the activity on flipchart paper.
- Have supplies and handouts ready.

BACKGROUND

Welcome to a discussion on how we can help committees be successful. Probably most of us have had experiences with committees that worked well and some groups that couldn't quite get it together. Let's think about our experiences. What are successful committees like?

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Describe A Successful Committee?

(Hand out paper and pencil if members need them.) Please write down as many things as you can to answer the question: What are successful committees like? After you've done that, we'll ask you to share one idea from your list and we'll record your answer on the flipchart. After everyone has had an opportunity to share one idea, we'll see if there are other ideas and record those, too. (Tape the flipchart pages to a wall. Leave enough room for additional pages from the next activity.)

Supporting Club Committees

You've identified important qualities of successful committees. Now, the million dollar question: What do we need to do to help committees do well? Let's look at each successful committee characteristic and develop tips for what the committee advisor(s) can do.



Activity: Ideas to Help Committees Be Successful

(Divide the audience in small groups.) We would like each group to take 1-3 characteristics identified in the previous activity and provide as many tips as possible for each characteristic. You'll have a few minutes for this task. Then you'll report your ideas and we'll record your responses on the flipchart. (Place the characteristic pages next to each other. Draw arrows between the tips and the characteristics. Ask if anyone has any additional tips to add and record them.)

Role of Supportive Older Members and Adults

For most 4-H members, serving on a committee may be one of their first leadership experiences. They need a more experienced youth or adult to give them guidance. Some clubs have a volunteer role called “Committee Advisor” or “Committee Coach.” This does not have to be the club's organizational leadership team.

Sources:

- Created by Linda Kustka, Professor Emeritus, Department of Youth Development, UW-Extension.
- Jeanne Baum, “How to Effectively Involve Youth” and “Successful Functioning of Committees & Meetings,” Youth Volunteers in Motion, Madison, WI: UW-Extension, 1989.

Remember that leadership skills are learned through “how” the committee does its work. An important goal is to teach those who are less experienced how to serve on and chair committees. Tasks for the Committee Coach include:

- Talk about how and why the committee needs to work.
- Help the chair develop the agenda.
- Coach the chair in how to conduct the meeting.
- Help the chair keep the meeting “on track.”
- Do not dominate talking at the meeting.
- Consider involvement strategies to get the committee members interacting in the beginning.

After the committee is formed, they need to establish a meeting time and place that are convenient for everyone. If a chair needs to be identified, there are several options. These include asking someone to volunteer before first meeting, electing someone at first committee meeting, or appointing someone from the committee.

At the first meeting, the committee should be reminded of their task(s), have an agenda facilitated by a chair, and have someone serve as note taker. The agenda needs to include plenty of time to discuss the tasks, set goals, decide who will do what, assign deadlines, and identify a time/place for the next committee meeting. Hand out the “Committee Planning Sheet” as a tool for committee members to understand and record their work. Customize this tool to fit the committee needs by defining the committee’s purpose. Everyone at the committee meeting should be writing down important information on the planning sheet. Long standing committees benefit by having an official note taker/secretary who will keep all the meeting notes in a folder or ring binder.

Reporting Back

Build in “periodic progress checks” as an informal way for committee members to report on their progress and challenges faced. The progress checks can be done in person, by phone or email. This is a time for the committee members, chair and supporting adult and/or youth leaders to ask: How’s it going? How are you feeling about the task? Set a date at the committee meeting for checking progress.

The committee should also be prepared to report their work to the rest of the club members at meetings. The reporter can be the chair or another committee member. The report should include: when the committee met, their decisions or recommendations, and club action on their recommendations and budget requests.

Closing

Just as the periodic progress check is a way to evaluate committee efforts, 4-H Youth Development Extension staff benefit from your reactions to this session. We appreciate your completing the evaluation.

TALK IT OVER**Reflect:**

- What advantages and disadvantages do you see for having a “Committee Coach” or “Advisor?”
- What qualities should a “Committee Coach” or “Advisor” possess?

Apply:

- What tips would you give the “Committee Coach” or “Advisor?”
- What idea about supporting committees would be helpful for your 4-H club?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY**Enhance:**

- Combine this lesson with “Forming Club Committees.” If you’re unable to teach or provide information about forming committees in the future, give out resources on this important topic.
- There are a number of helpful tip sheets related to club committees at the University of Illinois Extension 4-H web site listed below.

Simplify:

- If you have less time available, substitute a presentation on successful committee qualities for the first activity. Use your list of qualities as the basis for the activity “Ideas to Help This Happen.”

EVALUATION

It is important to use an evaluation that is consistent with your teaching objectives. The short evaluation in the handouts can be modified to meet your needs. An alternative to a written evaluation is to record the Reflection discussion under “Talk It Over.” Recruit someone ahead of time to take notes while you are leading the discussion. Remember to share the evaluation results with 4-H Youth Development Extension staff in your county.

ADDITIONAL WEB LINKS

- “Planning Guide for 4-H Clubs: Working with Committees,” University of Illinois Extension at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/committees/.

Finalized by the Strengthening 4-H Club Leadership Work Team on September 2005.

Handout

4-H Committee Planning Sheet

Name of Committee:

Purpose of Committee:

Committee Chair:

Committee Notetaker:

Committee Members		
Names	Phone	Address or E-mail

Deadline for Committee Work:

Committee Decisions:

Committee Tasks:

Committee Tasks		
What	Who	When

Future Meeting Time & Place:

Dates for Committee Chair(s) to Report Progress to the 4-H Club:

Supporting 4-H Club Committees

Evaluation

1. How useful will this information be to help your club committees? (Circle one response.)

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Sure Not Useful

2. Do you feel better prepared to support club committees?

Yes No

3. What will you do as a result of this program?