Creating Connections That Count
Supervisor Manual

The following manual was written to support the online course, “Assets In Action.” The activities, discussions, and readings that follow are to be done in conjunction with the online module. This content will reinforce those concepts and will assist supervisors in training staff and creating new ideas for the work place in the arena of youth development. All the activities have been presented and are proven to inspire and enlighten.

Introduction to Training

Now that we've had the opportunity to learn the 40 Developmental Assets Framework, it's important to bring us all together as a group and figure out how can we apply this to our site. Francis Bacon said, “Knowledge is power!” This sounds great, but it's not true. Knowledge is potential power. It's what we DO with the things we learn where true power lays.

As you recall from the course ANYONE can be an asset builder and we need to be intentional. So let’s take some time, and work together to figure out how are we going to apply what we’ve learned to make our organization asset rich.
Creating Connections That Count

Change!

Prep Time: None

Materials: Easel, Easel Pad, Markers,

Activity Time: 10-15 Minutes

Outcomes:

1. Teach audience they can't change anyone who doesn't want to change.
2. Demonstrate they can make changes in how they do things, which may help them be more effective.
3. Teach them they have an increased chance to influence change in young people through connections.
4. Teach the importance of “Why?” and “How?” when requesting change from anyone.

Look at the audience and say, “Change seats!” Then quietly stare at them, as they remain seated. Wait a bit and just as the audience begins to feel so uncomfortable they start to move have them sit down. Then point out what happened. “I asked you to move. You didn’t. Some of you stopped breathing. I asked you to change seats but you just sat there. Why didn’t you change?”

Wait for responses and write them on the easel.

They will say things like:

Comfortable
Don’t want to
Waiting for someone else to move
I like the people I’m sitting with
My stuff is here
I didn’t think you meant it
You didn’t tell us why
You didn’t tell us how

Processing:
I asked you to change seats. You gave me a bunch of reasons why you didn’t. In our work with young people, we are challenging them to change all the time. Here’s the question. Are they comfortable where they are? Do they like who they are “sitting” with? Would they have to leave stuff behind? Are they worried what people will think and waiting for someone else to move first? And are we providing a why and how to change?
Some may be thinking we don’t need the kids to change. But aren’t we hoping the young people we work with learn, develop, and grow?

Why is change difficult?
How might providing a why and how help in working with young people?
When I would ask my Dad “why?” he would say, “Because I ...” (pause and let audience finish)...”said so.” How does “because I said so” help someone change?

To impact young people we must provide a “why” and a “how” and though we can’t make someone change, we can influence change in others through sincere, caring, authentic connections. Understanding assets are key to creating those connections.
K.E.Y.S.S to Creating Connections

Don’t forget your KEYSS

Prep time: None

Materials: None

Activity Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Outcomes:

1. Have audience realize that assets are not something to fear.
2. They are basic and common sense and they may already know them.
3. There input is valuable and necessary.

Have audience members break into groups of three. Have them take out their keys. Introduce them selves to the other two, share how long they have been working with young people, and then share what each key is for. Next have them brainstorm how their life would be affected if their keys disappeared. The person with the most keys will report out some of what the group shared.

Processing:
How many of you frequently lose your keys or just forget where you put them? Who here is been working with young people 2 years, 5 years, 25 years?

Keys are an important basic fundamental part of our day-to-day lives. We couldn’t function without them but sometimes we forget them. Some in this room have been working with young people for over twenty years. What can I teach you about working with kids? You probably know much of what I’m going to share. Assets are basic fundamental keys to working with young people. We will function better if we use them. But even if we’ve worked with kids forever we can still sometimes forget.
K is for KNOWLEDGE

The K in KEYSS stands for knowledge. There are two very important things we must know when working with young people.

First, know the rewards.

The “Why I do, what I do” Collage

Materials: Paper, Old Magazines, Markers, Art Supplies

Activity Time: 45 minutes

Explain:
Break into pairs and discuss.
What do you get out of doing this type of work?
What is your reward? Besides money, because I know we are all getting rich doing this, what else do you get?

(Facilitator note: As participants answer make sure they are using “I” statements.)

Create a work of art that reminds you of this reward or a time you thought, “This is why I do this!”

Have audience share art and responses.

Also share a specific time when they experienced that reward.

Why is it important when working with young people there are greater rewards than our paychecks?
Where do we spend our time focusing on the challenges or the rewards?
How might building assets create more of those “reward” moments?
How would focusing on those moments impact our work environment?
And how might that impact the kids?
How is working with young people different than other types of work?
Give an example of an adult here that does a great job of focusing on the rewards of this job?

It’s easy to forget why we do this. Sometimes we even ask ourselves, “Why am I doing this?” It is important at those moments especially to have an answer.

Have them place the art project somewhere they will see it frequently (office, desk, cubicle, car, wallet) and be reminded of the rewards of working with young people and why we want to continue to build assets?
K is for Knowledge

“What Do You Do?”

Materials: A copy of the “What Do You Do?” Article

Activity time: 15 minutes

Explain:

Read. Discuss in small groups. Report out to large group.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

“So, what do you do?” asked passenger 14B of flight 1238. The question startled me. Not because I hadn’t heard it before. As far as questions go, “What do you do?” is pretty popular. As a traveler, I have heard “What do you do?” more than I have heard Shakira’s, “My hips don’t lie.” In airports it has recently replaced “Have these bags been in your control since you packed them?” as the most frequently asked question. The only airport question that comes anywhere close to “What do you do?” is “Where are you headed?” “Where are you headed?” is especially interesting when asked by someone seated next to you on the plane.

No, the question startled me because I was asleep. I was just wrapping up a 10-day jaunt that took me to New York, Kansas and South Dakota and I was exhausted. Somewhat dazed I asked, “Excuse me?” To which 14B repeated, “What do you do?” In an attempt to be polite, and still get back to sleep as soon as possible I mumbled, “I work with young people.” With that, 14B smiled, and with a mixture of bewilderment and condescension said, “Well that must be very rewarding. And since you get to hang out with kids it must be a lot of fun.” I said, “It is fun but I do more than just hang out wi..” “Oh no I was just saying, you don’t have to sit in a factory you know, building, making or maintaining something.” 14B interrupted apologetically.

With that I smiled, closed my eyes, and tried to go back to sleep. I wasn’t angry or even offended, I understood. Most people think of youth development as dances and pizza parties. They think people who work in youth development, teachers, counselors, and the like, are glorified babysitters. We are the people who look out for their children, while they do the “real jobs”, you know, building, making, and maintaining things. Youth work while noble, isn’t necessary.

Now no one admits this. They say things like “youth are our future”, as they cut funding for programs and vote down school levies. But still, I understand. You see, five years ago I was thinking very similar thoughts. In the aftermath of 9/11, I was wondering if what I did really mattered. I saw people doing their jobs running into buildings, young men and women going to war, and a President urge his people to get back out there and buy, buy, buy. I didn’t see the necessity in my work. After expressing this to some co- workers and others in the youth development arena, I became aware that I was not alone.
Fortunately, the days, weeks, months and years since that day, have provided me with a new perspective. On that ten day jaunt I had learned that what we do may be as important as any other “real job” I know. On September 11, 2002, I watched Steve, an eighth grade student at Blind Brook Middle School, just outside New York City, stand and address all 300 of his schoolmates. He spoke calmly and eloquently on how this day was one to memorialize the events of the past, but more importantly it was a day to take the lessons from those sad events and put them into action. I was also there a half hour before he spoke. Steve was nervous and unsure if he wanted to address the school and introduce the speaker. The Student Assistance counselor not only reassured Steve that he could do it, she got him excited about his formidable opportunity.

Then in Kansas, I watched 6 teens from Columbus Ohio, along with 12 teen leaders from Kansas, facilitate an incredible statewide youth summit. These teens lead energizers, presented skits, spoke about their choices, implemented team building activities, and coordinated action planning sessions. Several youth workers who not only provided the opportunity, but also trusted the teens, and empowered them with the skills, tools, and resources necessary to succeed, made all of this possible.

Finally, in South Dakota I watched Amanda, a high school student, tear up at the closing session of their statewide conference. A conference that she had dreamed of and had been working on for over 4 months. She hugged me good-bye, then went on stage, and still crying thanked all the adults who worked with her to plan the conference, and supported her during it. She also thanked the 14 adults who volunteered their time to work with the 150 participants. Each of them was employed as youth development workers all over the state.

No, we don’t work in factories. The only thing we maintain is hope. The only thing we build is character. And the only thing we make is a difference. What you do matters. If you ever doubt it I know one person that never will, passenger 14A of flight 1238.

Know the rewards!

(Article was written by Ty Sells and reprinted from Youth To Youth International’s Network News, 2006)
K is For Knowledge

The second very important thing to know is, what it’s like to be young.

The Status Game

Materials: A deck of playing cards. Sort out 13 – 15 random cards between deuces and aces with a variety of suits. Have two aces and two deuces, all the rest an assortment 3- King. Shuffle those cards.

Activity Time: 45 Minute

Explain:
Ask for thirteen volunteers to come to the front of the room.
Have them make a line shoulder to shoulder across the front of the room.
Hand each person a card face down so they can't see it.
Tell them repeatedly, “Don’t look at your card.”
Then give the rest of the instructions.
“In a second I will tell you to raise your card. When I do, raise your card to your forehead in a way the value can be seen by the audience and others but you still don’t know what it is. I will then say go you will then mix and mingle with the others treating them based on the value of their card, aces being high and deuces, not so high. You can talk, but do not let others know their card. You will only be moving for 15 to 30 seconds. Get around to everybody. When time is up I will yell STOP. When I do I want you to quit interacting and get back in this line. Line up based on how you feel low on one side high on the other. The audience will observe the interactions and will help me with anything I miss. Raise your cards! Ready! Go!”

After they've interacted for about 15 to 30 seconds shout, “Stop! Line up! High down here low down there.” Repeat this over and over until everyone has found a spot in the line. Allow them to look at their card then hold it up so everyone can still see it while processing happens.

(Facilitator notes: Notice they line up roughly in order of the cards value.)

Processing:
How did the low end know where you belonged?
How did the high end know where you belonged?
How did the group in the middle know where you belonged?
Audience, what were some things you noticed?
How long did it take?
Why are they so good at this?

(Allow the participants to sit down and thank them then resume processing.)
How many of you have ever done this activity before? When no hands go up ask it again. Keep asking the question until they realize they do it every day.

Do our kids do this?
What do they use instead of cards?
(size, race, looks, money, gender, cars, sports, phones, etc.)
How does his impact them?
How does this affect their ability to function at our place?
Do you know where you were on this line when you were a kid?
How might that affect your ability to work with kids today?
How can asset building alleviate some of the negative consequences of this behavior?
Was there an adult that reached out to you as a young person?

SHARE A STORY
-Did you ever feel like an ace as a young person?
-Did you ever feel like a two?

POINT TO MAKE
-ALL KIDS SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE ACES. SET EXPECTATIONS FOR AN ACE AND HELP THEM REACH IT.
E is for ENVIRONMENT

The Asset Wall

Materials: Find 40 building blocks. The simplest alternative is to raid the kindergarten classroom of their cardboard building blocks (differing sizes does not matter). Label each block with one of the 40 assets, using a different color for each asset type group (i.e. all 6 “Support” assets are on a blue label, the 4 “Empowerment” assets are a yellow label, etc.) Have post-it pads available for 4-8 groups (2” x 2” or smaller)

Activity Time: 45 minutes

Activity:
Build a wall with all the assets before the participants arrive. Introduce the group to the “Asset Wall”, explaining that each brick represents one important part of what makes a strong positive environment for young people. Each one is a building block, and important to the strength of the wall. Then carefully take several bricks out without toppling the structure and explain that it is possible to not have all 40 bricks in place, but still have a good environment – a reasonably strong wall. Now pull out more blocks and watch the wall tumble, explain that at some point, when there are not enough building blocks present, the environment will become so weak that it will no longer be a place young people want to be.

Split the group into 4 or 8 groups and assign each group the one or two asset types they will be responsible for (it is helpful to have color coded name tags to match with the color of each brick asset type color to expedite this process). Have group members find their “asset bricks” and meet in their small group. (If you have four groups, assign one internal and one external asset type). Give each group a post-it pad and ask them to cover the brick with as many example of the existence of this asset in their work environment as possible. Ask that each “piece of evidence” of this asset be given its own post –it note. A good question to continually ask while doing this are, “How do you know this asset is present?” “What evidence is there that this asset exists?” Provide an example before groups begin their work.

Make sure each group identifies a facilitator, a recorder, a time -keeper, and a reporter.

After 20 minutes, have the groups reconvene and ask that each group come up and reconstruct the wall by having group members explain 1) the asset name and definition, and 2) the examples the group came up with.
(NOTE: This activity was created by Amy Caldwell, an architect by training, who helped organize and facilitate the Fairfield, Vermont Center School asset retreat.)

Processing:
What do you notice about the wall?
What thoughts or feelings does looking at the wall provoke?
What information can we learn from the wall?
How can it help us make our environment a place young people want to be?
What areas have we done a good job of reinforcing assets?
Why do you think we are strong in these areas?
What areas can we be more diligent in improving?
Why do these areas provide a greater challenge?
E is for ENVIRONMENT

The H- Factor

Prep Time: None

Materials: Pencil, Paper

Activity Time: 45 Minutes

Discuss:
How is our environment conducive to asset development?
Is it a place where young people want to be?
How can we use our knowledge of assets to create a place open to creating
correlations with our youth?

Explain:
Take out a piece of paper and write the numbers 1 – 5 down the left side. I will ask
five questions. Write down answers and we will come back and process.

For question 1:
What do you want to be when you grow up?

For question 2:
Who were your heroes when you were a kid?

For question 3:
Write down some words that remind you of the last time you laughed really hard?

For question 4:
How do you learn?

For question 5:
Word Association. For each of the following words think of an adult that embodies
the word. First word Integrity. Next Compassion. Finally Unconditional Love.

The answers to these questions provide us with the H- factor. Five words that all
start with “H” and share asset building strategies to enhance an environment
for young people. The words are:

1. Hope
2. Heroes
3. Humor
4. Head
5. Heart
HOPE

ASSETS ADRESSED: Positive view of personal future, High expectations, Community values youth, Other adult relationships

Discuss:
Have audience share what they want to be when you grow up?

Explain:
Question 1 is related to hope. Not some ethereal idealistic concept but real live future orientation. If a child has no hope, no sense of tomorrow, then the decisions they make today don’t really matter. Choices that insure immediate gratification actually make sense. We must constantly strive to keep kids in the present, but with one eye on the future. We know this with little kids but over time we stop asking the question.

Processing:
Do you know what the kids you work with want to be when they grow up?
How might knowing what they want to be help you create connections?
Do they know what you want to be when you grow up?
How might sharing that help you create connections?
How many of you have become what you wanted to be as a child?
If no, why did you quit trying?
How is that consistent with the messages we give young people?
Is it true when we tell young people, “Never give up, you can be anything you want to be?”
If so why did we quit?
If we can’t become that exact thing is there something in the field that would make you just as happy?
And how would them seeing us continuing to pursue our dreams impact the kids we work with?
What are steps you can take now to put you back on the track of being what you as a young person wanted to be?

Exercise:
Fill out a three by five card writing two short term and two long-term goals.
Do this with the kids you work with. Create a chart posted for everyone to see and periodically ask kids what are they doing today to get closer. Alter programming and relate it to those goals. Celebrate publicly as short and long-term goals are accomplished. Have your own and other staff member goals included along side the young peoples.
HEROES

ASSETS ADDRESSED: Adult role models, Community values youth, Other adult relationships

Discuss:
Have audience share their heroes from when they were younger.

Explain:
Question 2 is related to heroes. Young people look to others as examples of behavior. It can be said that one cannot choose whether or not one will be a role model. One can only choose what behavior are they going to model. Young people will look to us for guidance whether we want them to or not. Be mindful of your actions.

Processing:
Do you know the heroes of the kids you work with?
Do they know yours?
How are they different/same?
How might learning and sharing this information increase opportunities for connection?
Is there a difference between a hero and a celebrity?
Can you be or are you already a hero to any of the young people you work with?
What responsibility comes with the label?
Is it fair?

Exercise:
Create a hero board. Using a corkboard put up as many heroes of yours as you can. Make sure it is an assortment of people. (Some famous, some not, and a great deal of diversity. Place this board in a visible area and invite one on one conversation. This will provide not only an authentic opportunity to connect, it also allows you to explore and teach the qualities of character in a non-threatening way. It is not imperative the young people remember the names of all those on your board but it does matter they learn the qualities that made those people great.
HUMOR

ASSETS ADDRESSED: Youth programs

Discuss:
Have the audience share a bit of the story of the last time they laughed really hard.

Processing:
How many of you had that big laugh today?
How many was it this week? Month? Year?

Explain:
Question 3 revolves around humor. Not comedy, but is our environment a place young people want to be? Norman Cousins writes in his book Anatomy of an Illness young people laugh up to 400 times a day while adults laugh only 15. How many people in this audience used to be young people? Why did you quit laughing? Keep having fun!

Exercise:
Go around the room and have several of the members lead the audience in some of the games or songs they loved when they were in school or safe place.

HEAD

ASSETS ADDRESSED: High expectations, Achievement motivation, Community values youth.

Discuss:
How do you learn?

Explain:
Question 4 revolves around learning styles. Understanding the way a young person learns is critically important in your ability to connect. There are so many different learning styles yet it is easy to fall into a trap of using your learning style when reaching out to others. Some say there are three styles visual, auditory, and tactile. Some say there are as many as eight (multiple intelligences). There may be a unique learning style for all seven billion people on the planet. The exact number doesn’t matter. It is important though to pay attention to the kids we work with and make an effort to recognize how they learn.
Read:

WE REMEMBER

10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we see and hear
70% of what we discuss with others
80% of what we personally experience
95% or what we teach others
- Edgar Dale

Processing:
How can knowing a young persons learning style increase opportunities to connect?
How do you feel when you are being asked to retain information that is being shared without respect to your learning style?
If this is true how does it impact the way we currently are doing things?
How can we differentiate, adjust our interactions with our youth according to their individual learning needs?
Is our environment currently conducive to different styles of learning?
Also, do boys interact and learn differently then girls? How?
Is our current programming inclusive of both?

HEART

ASSET ADDRESSED: Other adult relationships, Community values youth,

Discuss:
Who were the names you matched with each word?

Explain:
Question 5 revolves around the heart. Not the logical or scientifically proven impact a positive adult can have on a young person. It helps us reconnect with the feelings associated with having an authentic connection with an adult that cares about us. Quite simply think of the behaviors those people exemplified while interacting with you, and do those when working with our kids.

Exercise:
Fill out the following handout. (How Asset Builders Shaped Our Lives, Looking Back, Everyone’s an Asset Builder) Break into triads and discuss answers.
HOW ASSET BUILDERS SHAPED YOUR LIFE

Even though the list of 40 assets was just created in recent years, we all have experienced asset builders in our lives, whether we're age 10 or 50. In the spaces below, jot down the names of the people who have built each type of asset for you and how that person has made a difference in your life.

If you are younger than 20, you may want to think about people who currently build assets for you. If you're older than 20, either think about someone who does now or think back to your own childhood and adolescence. It's okay to leave some boxes blank if no one comes to mind. It is also okay to list the same person in several boxes.

Think of someone who has...

Shown you love and understanding during a time you really needed it. (Support Assets)

Set clear boundaries for you even when it wasn't the easy thing to do. (Boundaries and Expectations Assets)

Helped you get really excited about learning new things. (Commitment to Learning Assets)

Helped you develop important skills, like getting along with others. (Social Competencies Assets)
Helped you feel like you have something important to contribute to others. (Empowerment Assets)

Helped you get a lot out of activities in your school, a youth organization, or a congregation. (Constructive Use of Time Assets)

Been a role model in living out positive values such as honesty, integrity, and caring. (Positive Values Assets)

Helped you feel good about yourself and optimistic about your future. (Positive Identity Assets)
Focus on the H- Factor, Hope, Hero, Humor, Head and Heart and create the optimal environment to build assets and create connections that count.
Y is for YOUR ROLE

The Y in KEYSS is for YOUR ROLE. Any one can partner with a young person to build assets. It’s not the job of the supervisor, manager, crew- member, team leader, custodian, or security guard. Titles don’t matter! It is simply your responsibility. Whoever you are. Regardless of the politics in your work place, you can stay focused on what really matters.

THE MAIN THING

is to keep
THE MAIN THING
THE MAIN THING!

Our main thing is the young people we come in contact with.

Read:

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, And Nobody

This is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody’s job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Use the following handout to examine ways YOU can be an asset builder.
Building Assets in Every Part of Your Program

Use the Developmental Assets framework to enrich your program. Figure out creative ways to build all 40 of the Developmental Assets in each of these aspects of your program:

**Individual Relationships**

- How can you build assets for and with young people by the way you interact with them?

- How can you encourage young people to build each other’s assets?

**Program Climate**

- How can you create a warm, caring climate?

- How can you respond when the climate begins to become tense or cool?

**Program Location**

- How can you decorate your surroundings in asset-building ways?

- How can you include program participants in making your place feel like their place?
Program Publicity

- How can you promote your program in asset-building ways?

- How can you involve young people in your publicity efforts?

Program Content

- How can you include asset-building activities in your curricula?

- How can you adapt your activities so that they build relationships and a sense of community?

Program Evaluation

- How can you include asset building in your program evaluation?

- How can you get feedback from program participants, their parents, and your leadership?

Your Overall Program

- How can you use the asset approach in all your program plans and decisions?

- How can you recognize the asset-building actions of individuals in your program?

- How can you include asset building in all aspects of your program?
S for Strategy

Explain:
Though much of asset building seems like common sense, we can have greater success by being intentional in our asset building. What if we looked at it as a mission? What if instead of waiting for opportunities to present themselves, we PLANNED for those opportunities? We can CREATE those chances. We can also look at the things we do now that may actually get in the way of building assets and eliminate those. We can institutionalize asset building within our agency, but we must all be on the same page.

Go There

Have participants stand and form groups of six. Have them join hands in the middle so they are holding two different peoples hands. Instruct them there is to be no talking. Have them look around the room then close their eyes. Tell them to think of a spot in the room they personally want to go to. Say without breaking hands and without talking, “Go there!”

After a few seconds of them struggling, have them stop and open their eyes.

Processing:
Ask a few participants where they wanted to go and if they got there?
Did anybody get where they wanted to go?
How could we have been more effective?
What feelings come up when we are all working on our own and not all moving in the same direction?

Distribute the following handout. Have participants fill them out individually. Then discuss with the large group
Asset building should be **intentional**, we should build in opportunities for it **everyday**, it is best done **not for the kids** but **with the kids**.
S is for SHAMPOO INSTRUCTIONS

Lather! Rinse! **Repeat**!

Repeat is the important part. Asset Building is an on-going process to be done with the youth not for the youth. Over time our young people change. Not only new kids coming in and others are moving on, but the young people who are still with us change as well. Their hopes, dreams, goals, perspectives, and knowledge are in a state of flux. The things we do today may not work tomorrow. Our program must be dynamic and always looking for **NEW** ways to impact our kids in a positive way.

We must also involve our young people in the process. Make them partners and our success will be assured.

**KNOWLEDGE**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**YOUR ROLE**

**STRATEGIES**

**SHAMPOO INSTRUCTIONS**

DON’T FORGET YOUR KEYSS!