

Values and visions

Overview

This group of activities encourage students to reflect and share values. Through discussion, the group will work towards developing a shared vision to guide the student leadership group.

A longer time period will help students explore more deeply around personal and shared values. Creating a vision statement may also take further time and it may be useful to develop a draft statement that can be reviewed and refined at a later meeting.

Learning intentions

- To explore the values that are important to the participants
- To work cooperatively to establish shared values and develop a vision for the student leadership team.

Resources

- 'Values list' handout
- Post-it notes
- Butcher's paper or whiteboard and markers
- Copy of the school vision statement and/or values

Activity 1: My personal values

Instructions

- Give the students a copy of the values list handout (please note, the values in bold are the Department of Education values; the list can be added to, to include the school's values):
- Ask participants to circle 5 values that best reflect what is important in them, in their everyday decision making, behaviours and beliefs.
- Using post-it notes, ask participants to write a goal for themselves as a student leader, based on one of these values and to stick them on a nearby wall.
- Each student chooses someone else's post-it note and reads it out to the group. They must then say which value they think that goal aligns to.

For example, goals: to speak confidently (underlying value: courage, excellence); to establish a student led environment team (underlying value: teamwork, environment).

- Discuss with the group and sort the post-it notes, based on similar goals and common values. This will help to determine any common goals and values shared by the group and will be used in Activity 2: Shared values.

Before moving on to Activity 2, you might like to discuss with the group how our values are developed and shaped, reflecting on our different life experiences, family and culture.

Activity 2: Shared values

Instructions

- It can be challenging to reduce the list of values to just a few. Explain to the students that this activity is as much about working together as a team when faced with challenges and decision making, as it is about creating a final list of shared values.
Reflecting on the goals and values identified in activity 1, work with the group to come to an agreement about their common or shared values and why they are important. If possible, aim for 5- 7 values. Please note, other values including the school's values can be added to the list.
- The students can decide how the values get 'voted on'. If the students have completed the "Making decisions" activity, they could be gently encouraged to use one of the decision making strategies.
- Guiding points during this activity might include;
 - respecting the values of others
 - how personal experience and background can influence values
 - making sure the final choice is representational of the whole group
 - how values can influence decisions
 - which values matter most in emerging student leaders.

Debriefing questions

This is a reflection on the teamwork that took place during activity 2.

- How did we decide on our shared values?
- Did everyone have a 'voice'? Did we work well as a team?
- Did you feel comfortable to share your thoughts?
- Would you like the opportunity to redo the exercise? What could we do differently?

Please note, it may be important to repeat the decision making process and ensure everyone has a say and involvement.

Concluding comments

Our values shape who we are, what we think and our day to day decisions and actions. While our team may have decided on some 'shared values', it's important to respect that individuals may have other values that should also be considered and respected.

Knowing our shared or similar values can help to inform our next steps and team planning.

Activity 3: Creating a team vision

Instructions

This activity builds on discussion from activity 1 and 2. Creating a vision statement may help students to understand the team's purpose to communicate to others and provide a focus for future direction and actions. Depending on the time available, an initial draft statement may be developed that the group revisits at a later time, to then refine and consolidate.

Make sure the list of values identified by the group (activity 1 and 2) are clearly posted: this could be simply written on butcher's paper or a whiteboard for students to refer to during the activity.

Ask students to suggest what a vision statement is and why it might be needed. You might prompt students with examples of vision statements. For example,

'The Department of Education has a vision statement: To Be Australia's best education system and one of the finest in the world, or,

'Our school's vision statement is, 'to provide all students with quality education and opportunities to achieve their personal best'.

- Ask students what the vision statement tells us about the organisation and it's impact on the audience. Answers might include: what the organisation does, what it's aiming to do or its goals, what's important or its values; it inspires confidence, it outlines a future focussed direction. It might be useful to capture some responses or key words on butcher's paper or whiteboard.
- Explain to the students the next activity is to brainstorm ideas to help create a vision statement for our team. Divide the group into four smaller groups; hand out butcher's paper (A4 or A3 paper can also be used) and ask one student to be the group's scribe.
- Explain to the groups they will have 5 minutes to brainstorm each of the following questions:
 - What does our team do?
 - Who does the team: help, work with and represent?
 - What might the team's goals for the next year include?

- Ask the groups to now craft a statement that reflects their brainstorm ideas, the values previously identified, and is future focused.

Groups can write their draft statement on butcher's paper or whiteboard to share with the group.

- The whole group then reads and considers all the draft statements, looking for similarities and agreement, how they align with the school's vision and the team's purpose and goals.

A collective statement is then created for the leadership team to consider and reflect on.

Encourage students to chat with others (school staff and peers) about the proposed vision statement for feedback and comment.

The team should then re-consider and make any appropriate changes or additions before finalising their vision statement.

Debriefing questions

This activity encourages students to collaborate on the development of a team vision. Questions to guide student and team reflection could include:

- How helpful was it to brainstorm ideas in small groups before sharing with the whole group?
What other strategy could be used to work through ideas and to come to an agreement?
- Has the draft vision statement captured our team goals and values? Who else should we ask for feedback about the statement?
- How can we use this statement in the future? Think about team planning, recruiting new members, sharing information about the team with the school community.

Concluding comments

Understanding our values and creating a shared vision is important. It helps

- creates a sense of ownership and involvement for individual members
- strengthen relationships between team members
- to express what's important to the team
- our planning for future actions
- others to understand the purpose and vision of the team.

The vision statement can help with our discussions with other people, including school staff and students, and also for our planning. We can also review this statement as our team grows and in future years to make sure it continues to reflect our goals and values.

Values list

Accountability
Achievement
Adventure
Ambition
Authority
Challenge
Compassion
Connection to country
Competence
Courage
Creativity
Democracy
Dependability
Determination
Enthusiasm
Environmental awareness
Equity
Excellence
Excitement
Fame
Family
Financial security
Freedom
Friendship
Fulfilment
Happiness
Harmony
Health
Heritage
Honesty
Independence
Individualism
Integrity
Kindness
Love
Loyalty
Passion
Peace
Power
Quality of life
Relationships
Religion
Responsibility
Safety
Service
Social status
Spirituality
Stability
Success
Teamwork
Trust
Truth
Understanding
Wealth
Wisdom