

FOCUS

A Herff Jones Impact Resource For Advisers

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JANUARY FOCUS: Learning to Process An Activity



After completing an activity there is an important process to complete. Several terms are used to define what takes place. Some include debrief, discuss, and process.

Many student activity advisers speak of processing an activity. All of the terms mean essentially the same thing - which is to talk about what just happened and to determine its application to real life. The activity adviser acts as a guide during the discussion. One should steer the direction of the discussion rather than trying to dominate it. Do not be afraid of silence during the discussion, give everyone time to think - as students share aloud they become more confident of their opinions.

This also improves communication skills. A good discussion can educate students by the process as well as what is said. The chance to share ideas and opinions creates the opportunity for students to become better communicators as well as speakers, listeners, and thinkers.

BENEFITS OF PROCESSING AN ACTIVITY

1. Students learn to take turns speaking
2. Students learn to value the other person's opinion and experiences
3. Students can experiment with new thoughts, opinions, and ideas in a safe environment
4. Students can develop skills of observation, analysis, and logic
5. Students learn to clarify and review what they have learned
6. Students will learn opinions that differ from their own
7. The adviser can evaluate a student's understanding of what is being discussed
8. The adviser can hear what the students are thinking, feeling, and experiencing

9. Very flexible and adaptable to varying age groups and topics
10. Is student oriented, yet adviser controlled

THE BASICS OF STARTING PROCESSING - GROUND RULES

1. Personal issues that are brought up during the discussion time stay in the room and are not repeated to families, friends or others
2. There will be absolutely no putdowns, sarcasm, or humor directed towards or at the expense of another person
3. There is no such thing as a dumb question, comment, or opinion. Everyone has the right to ask or say what they want as long as it is appropriately expressed
4. Individuals are encouraged to talk
5. Out of respect for the speaker, only one person speaks at a time
6. Don't be afraid of silence
7. Prepare questions ahead of time to be prepared for the processing. Good discussion questions lead to a good discussion
8. Don't be afraid to let the discussion go off track as long as it is filling needs

This newsletter is a joint effort of Jackie Burch and Herff Jones, Inc.

QUESTIONS TO AVOID DURING PROCESSING

1. Questions that have right or wrong answers
2. Questions that can be answered "yes" or "no"
3. Long, wordy questions where the meaning is forgotten before one stops asking
4. A question within a question
5. Questions that are either/or
6. Questions that have an obvious answer
7. Questions that are too general or too vague
8. Questions that the students do not have enough experience to answer

QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED TO KEEP THE PROCESSING GOING

1. Can you give us an example?
2. What did you mean when you said....?
3. What makes you believe that?
4. Please explain what you just said
5. What reason do you have to feel that way?
6. What part of the activity do you base your opinion on?
7. Could you explain that?
8. What other feelings do you have?
9. Please tell us more about.....?
10. What did you mean by.....?

11. What can you add?
12. Mary, what did you think of John's answer?
13. Tell us what you think
14. Well, we have heard from Jean and Greg. Mike, what do you think?

GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED IN PROCESSING

Remember, effective processing involves everyone. Some students will hesitate to speak in a group because they are shy or have low self-esteem and feel that their contribution will have no value. They may feel that the comments and opinions of others are more important than theirs. As the adviser, it is your job to involve everyone in the processing.

1. Start with questions that are non-threatening and not too personal
2. Use questions that ask for opinions rather than facts
3. Using an activity as the basis for the discussion gives everyone the same experience to discuss
4. Have the students write down their opinions and read them to the group for comments
5. Ask for comments from those who have not yet contributed
6. Ask a student what they thought of another student's comment

Use all of your talent as an activity adviser to involve everyone.

"If you want your life to be rewarding, you have to change the way you think."

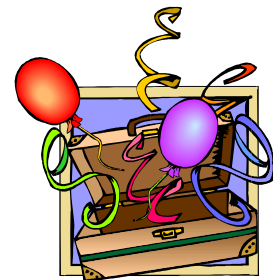
- Oprah Winfrey, Chairman Harpo Entertainment Group



"Your knowledge won't amount to much if you don't have a network of people to share it with."

- Tim Sanders, Chief Solutions Officer, Yahoo!

FROM ALL OF US AT
HERFF JONES.....



HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!

