

# Modeling Assets in Leadership Groups

While Search Institute's model of Developmental Assets is centered around the needs of youth, the basic framework can also be a useful tool for creating a healthy culture in teams leading an asset-building initiative. Equally important, using it this way reinforces and models the work you're doing to build assets in the community. Here are 16 tips linked to the eight categories of Developmental Assets that will improve the health of your leadership team:



## Support

- ✦ **Take time in each meeting for people to connect with each other.** This may include using name tags and starting with a warm-up team-building activity.
- ✦ **Create a climate in the team where people feel comfortable, accepted, and connected.** If individuals seem disengaged from the group process, check with them to be sure that they do not feel alienated or ignored. If they are, work together to find ways to change that.

## Empowerment

- ✦ **Actively involve the team members in decision making and in shaping the team efforts.** Members won't really be contributing if they are simply asked to OK plans or ideas made by others.
- ✦ **Make sure all group members feel valued and valuable as contributors to the team.** Know what individuals contribute as well as what group or organization they represent.

## Boundaries and Expectations

- ✦ **Establish clear ground rules** about how the group will work together—what's expected of individual members, what strategies will be used to problem-solve, and how decisions will be made.
- ✦ **Clarify expectations of the roles people play in meetings.** It's a good idea to designate a facilitator, a recorder, a timekeeper, and a process observer.

## Constructive Use of Time

- ✦ **Use people's time wisely by carefully planning meetings.** Seek input before developing an agenda, send the agenda out in advance, and be clear about the goal for each agenda item (discussion, decision, action, etc.). Start and end meetings on time.



- ✦ **Respect people's time limits** by not overscheduling meetings (either in frequency or length). Keep in mind that most people lead busy lives with multiple commitments.

## Commitment to Learning

- ✦ **Include opportunities during your meetings for learning about the community, about children and youth, and about asset building.** Not only will this enrich people's understanding, but it will strengthen the group's ability to make thoughtful decisions.
- ✦ **Don't assume that you always have to turn to an outside expert for knowledge.** Give team members opportunities to research issues or ideas, identify resources, and then present what they've learned to the whole group.

## Positive Values

- ✦ **Articulate the values that guide your group's vision and deliberations.**
- ✦ **Develop ground rules for team process** that reflect commitments to being honest, respecting each other, and honoring commonly held values.

## Social Competencies

- ✦ **Build team members' capabilities and skills through such practices as sharing leadership** by rotating team roles (facilitator, etc.) among members.
- ✦ **Nurture people's competence in working with a diverse group.** This includes training youth and adult members in working together.

## Positive Identity

- ✦ **Develop a clear sense of the group's purpose and vision.** While you may not need a formal mission statement, it's important for people to be clear about why they are spending time together.
- ✦ **Celebrate together.** Celebrate the gifts of team members, the community, your accomplishments, and your hopes for the future.