

relationship connections: culture and its impact on youth—adult partnerships

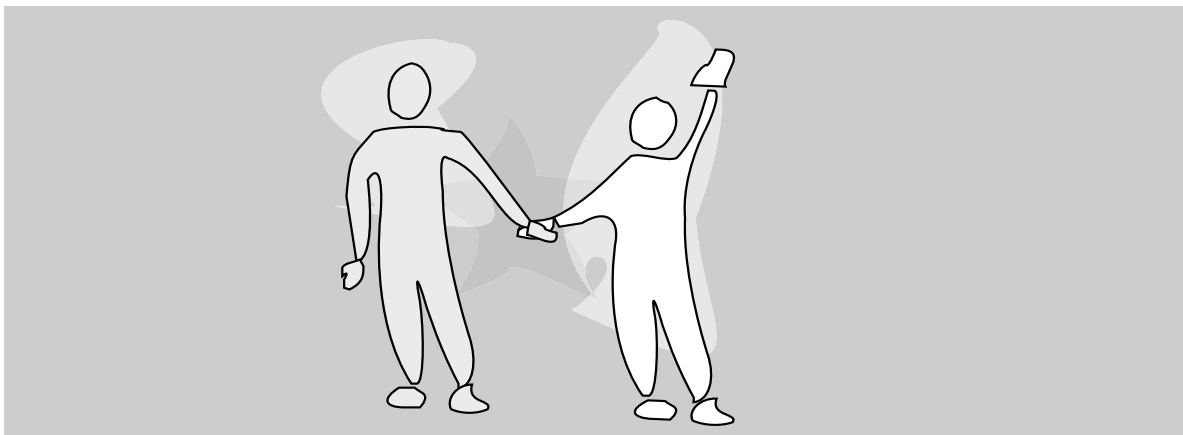
purpose • To help participants increase their ability to develop and support youth–adult partnerships that include a variety of cultural traditions

time 75 minutes

group size 20 to 30 participants

materials • Flip chart and easel
• Flip chart sheets
• Markers
• Spray adhesive
• Stick figures and labels
• Activity questions on flip chart
• Process questions on flip chart

prepare ahead Make stick figures and labels (see template, pg.82)



introduction

Explain to the group that the very notion of youth–adult partnerships challenges many cultural traditions. For example, there is an old adage that “children should be seen and not heard.” Many traditions uphold the idea that adults are wise and that the role of youth is to defer to their wisdom. The idea that youth and adults might have equal power and intelligence within a relationship is often threatening to strongly held beliefs. Ask the participants to think of some other examples, and record them on the flip chart.

Tell the participants that the challenge is to understand strongly held cultural beliefs and to develop and support youth–adult partnerships that respect or gently challenge the beliefs that make partnerships difficult.

step one

Divide the group into small groups of four or five people; groups should consist of a diverse mixture of ages, genders, races, religions, and so on. Give each group a set of stick figures, labels, and a flip chart sheet that has been treated on one side with spray adhesive, thus making one side sticky.

step two

trainer note: Participants may find the following questions challenging.

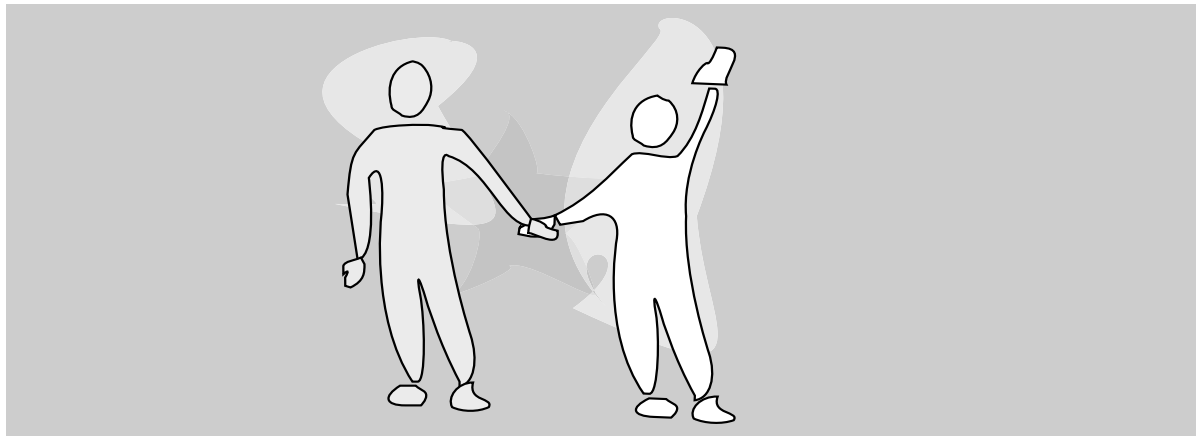
If necessary, ask the group for examples or prepare examples applicable to your audience in advance.

Ask each group to complete the following steps:

Identify various cultural groups represented within each small group.

Answer the following questions, using the stick figures and sticky flip chart paper to illustrate.

section two: foundations for youth-adult partnerships

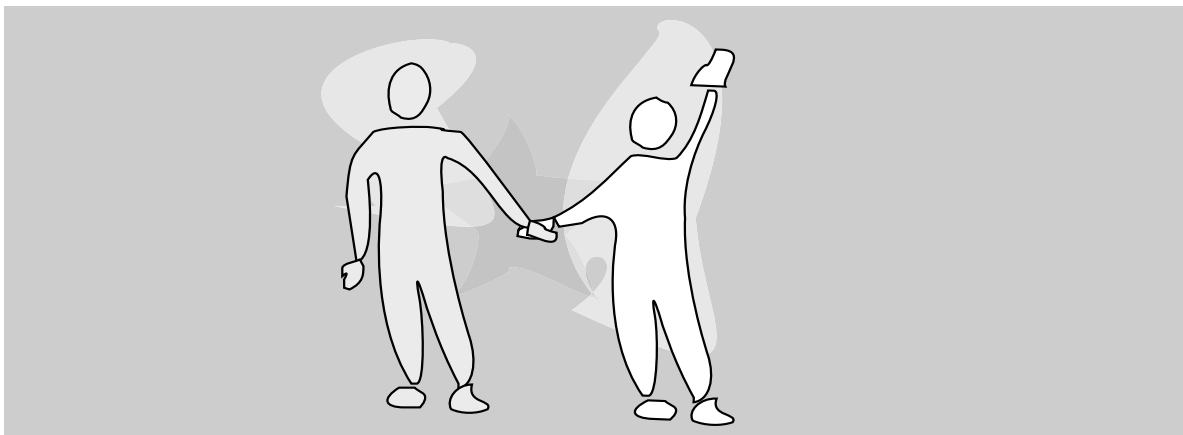


trainer note: Post the following questions on flip chart paper for the small groups to see as they work together. Figures can be placed and re-placed on the sticky flip chart sheets.

- Within the family structure, what are the “sacred relationships” within each cultural group? These are the special, primary relationships upon which family decisions are made. For example, in white, middle-class culture in the United States, it might be the married couple or parents. In the Maori culture of New Zealand, it is the grandparent–grandchild relationship.
- What are some “nontraditional” family structures that exist? (e.g., single-parent families, same-sex partners, and so forth)
- Within the family structure, who is/are the primary leader(s) or decision maker(s)?
- Within the community structure, who is/are the primary leader(s)?
- Who is considered to be wise?
- How do people know they belong, and to what do they belong?
- What is the role of men? Of women?
- What is the role of youth?
- Who teaches whom about being a good citizen, and what do they teach?

step three

Have the small groups return to the large group and share some examples of the various relationships and roles they discovered.



reflection and discussion

Process the activity using the following questions:

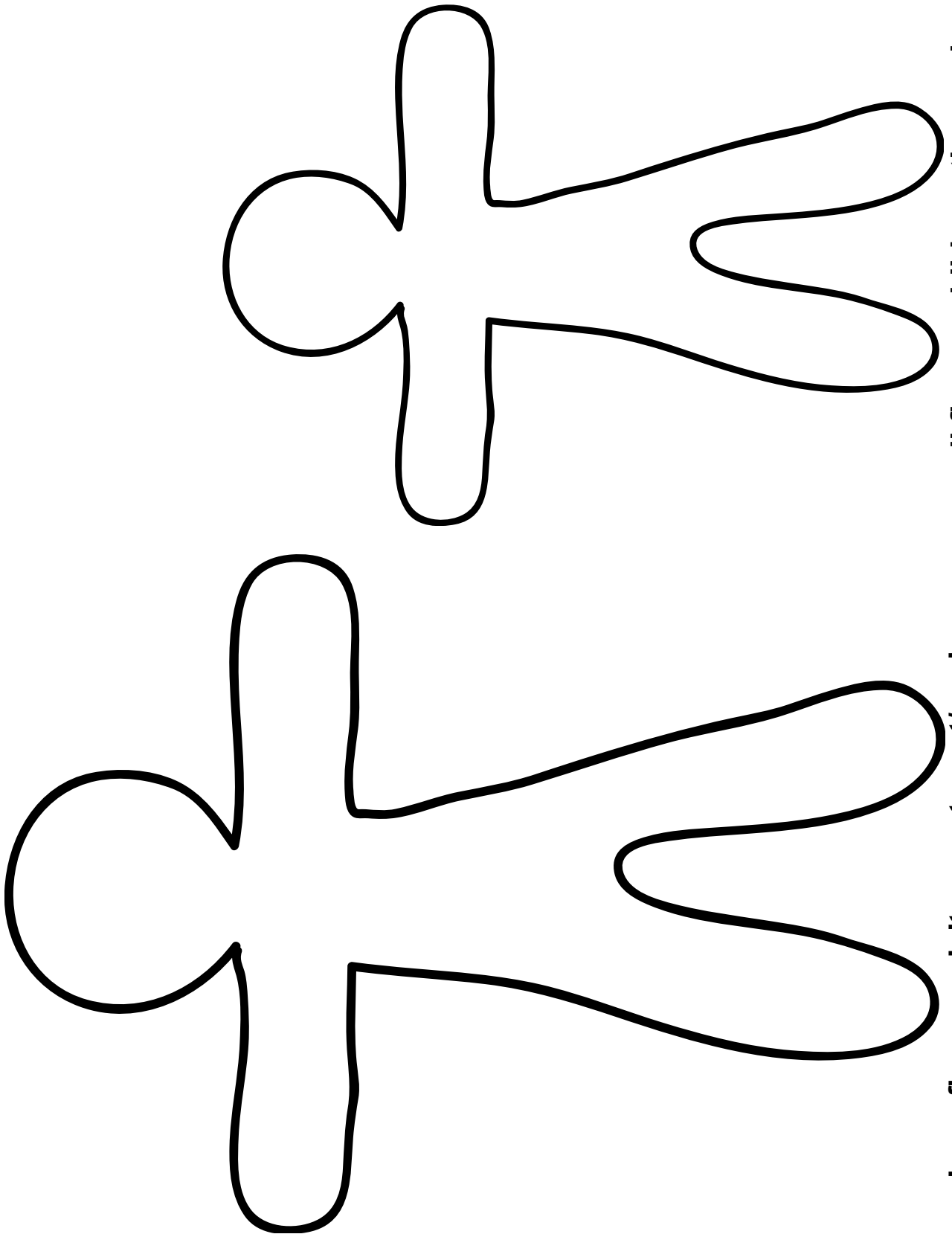
- What were the similarities and dissimilarities in cultures?
- What was easy to answer? Difficult to answer?
- How do these cultural traditions affect the way we see youth–adult partnerships? How can they affect family, community, or organizational support of youth–adult partnerships?
- How can we build and support youth–adult partnerships that are respectful of cultural traditions?
- How can we gently and appropriately challenge cultural traditions that inhibit youth–adult partnerships?
- How will you use this understanding in your youth–adult partnerships?

Record the responses to the last question on the flip chart.

Variation

Before the Reflection and Discussion, ask participants to create 2-minute presentations of success stories of youth–adult partnerships in different cultures. The stories can come from participants' own experiences or from stories they know about. Increase the activity time by 15 minutes for groups to prepare their presentations, and allow additional time for the presentations themselves.

relationship connection stick figure template



small figure - child, youth, cousin

**large figure - adult, parent, aunt/uncle,
teacher**