

## **THE SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES**

### **People Viewed as Objects**

The basis of this attitude is that one person or group of people “know what’s best” for another person or group of people. Or the first person or group may decide they have a right to determine the circumstances under which the second person or group may exist. The person being viewed and treated as an object usually knows it.

### **People Viewed as Recipients**

Here the first person or group still believes they know what is best for the other, but they “give” the other the opportunity in decision making because it will be “good” for the other person or group. Thus, the other is supposed to receive the benefits of what the first person gives them.

### **People Viewed as Resources**

Here there is an attitude of respect by the first person or group toward what the other person or group can do. This attitude and the behaviors which follow it can be closely associated with two matters of great concern: self-esteem and productivity.

Creating a culture in which people are viewed, respected and involved as resources is a worthy goal.

Young People Viewed as Objects	Young People Viewed as Recipients	Young People Viewed as Resources
<p>As an adult leader, I seldom ask for the opinions of the youth participants when I make program decisions</p> <p>It is most appropriate that adults determine what the programs for young people will be</p> <p>Adults are in the best position to evaluate the successes and failures of a specific program</p> <p>Training programs designed to improve organizational effectiveness should teach adults how to encourage young people to accept the organization's expectations, processes and programs as adults have designed them</p> <p>Management roles within our organization, by their very nature, are adult roles</p> <p>Fewer mistakes are made in carrying out a program for young people if adults perform the leadership roles themselves</p> <p>In our organization decision-making, adults should make the decisions</p> <p>I believe that allowing young people to participate in organizational decision making would mislead them into thinking they can influence matters beyond their control</p>	<p>As an adult leader, I engage young people in program decisions when I think this engagement will be a growth experience for them</p> <p>Asking young people to review adult-determined program plans will communicate to the young people that the adults respect them</p> <p>Asking the opinions of young people as a part of program evaluation will help them sharpen their thinking and observational skills</p> <p>Training programs designed to improve organizational effectiveness should teach adults how to engage young people's participation in those organizational decision processes that will help young people learn to make more responsible decisions in real-life situations</p> <p>Adults can share carefully selected management roles with those youth who are ready to learn, under close adult supervision, from the experience</p> <p>Allowing young people to assume some leadership roles can help them develop skills for the future</p> <p>Adults should allow young people to participate in making decisions that will provide learning experiences for them</p> <p>I believe that allowing young people to participate in organizational roles can open valuable learning opportunities for them</p>	<p>As an adult leader, I engage young people in making program decisions at the earliest point</p> <p>If young people are active participants in the planning process of an organization, they can help make the programs more relevant to their needs and desires</p> <p>Young people have a vantage point that is valuable for evaluating the successes and failures of specific programs</p> <p>Training programs designed to improve organizational effectiveness should teach adults how to foster young people's participation in decision making processes to bring the perspective of young people to bear on improving the organization</p> <p>Youth participation can enhance and enrich the various management roles within our organization</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to assume leadership responsibility within a youth / adult partnership in carrying out youth programs</p> <p>In our organizational decision-making, adults and young people should make the decisions</p> <p>I believe that experiences of young people give them a valuable perspective that can become useful in efforts to plan, operate, and evaluate the way the organization functions</p>

## **THE SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Style #1 – Young people Viewed as Objects**

Within this part of the attitudinal spectrum are several postures. One of these, most definitely an extreme, sees young people as the “property” of the adult and serves as a justification for abusive treatment of various kinds. The adult sees little value in the young person except as the young person serves the desires of the adult. As a result, the adult controls the young person to serve whatever interests the adult may have.

Less extreme, but within the same part of the spectrum, is the attitude that adults know what is best for young people and see young people as objects of their good intentions. This is not an uncommon parental attitude, and it is also often seen in adults who work professionally and as volunteers with young people. Within this attitude there is little room for a consideration of what young people think about the design of the program or opportunity. As the adult sees it, the responsibility of the young person is to take advantage of the program or opportunity designed by the adult.

### **Style #2 – Young people Viewed as Recipients**

The emphasis within this part of the spectrum is on young people as the recipients of the benefits of the program or opportunity. This may include youth participation in the design of the opportunity, but the primary emphasis of this attitude of the controlling adult(s) is on how the young person will benefit from the participation and not on what the young person has to offer to the design process. The adult is still well in control of the conditions under which the young person participates, but *allows* youth participation because of the *value of the experience* to the young person. This attitude is also based on the notion that adults know what is best for young people, and may lead one cautiously to begin to open the door to youth participation on the adult's terms. This relationship cannot reasonably be described as an adult / youth partnership, though there is some opportunity for the building of a sense of youth ownership in the outcome of the decisions made.

This attitude demonstrates a concern for preparing young people for the *future* as responsible decision makers.

### **Style #3 – Young people Viewed as Resources**

This attitude is based upon respect for the contribution young people can make to planning, operation, and evaluation of a youth-focused organization (or family or community) in the present. It acknowledges that any leadership and decision making roles involved can be shared by adults and young people. This may mean that both young people and adults need to learn the skills and attitudes necessary for shared decision making, and it may require some change in policy and administrative practice within the organization, or perhaps a reformulation of the organization's mission, if there is a shift towards the attitude from one of those described above.