



Adolescents identify challenges that they face and explore ways to cope with them through role plays.



## Activity Overview

### Purpose

Identify and brainstorm challenges, then role-play the challenges and discuss ways to cope.

### Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Explore ways to solve problems.
- ▶ Express feelings about personal challenges.

### Competency domains

Problem solving and managing conflict; Critical thinking and decision making; Leadership and influence.

### Works well for

Circles where adolescents are ready to work together and can hold a basic group discussion; adolescents of any age.

### Phase

Connecting.

### Before

Setting group rules in advance will help adolescents to listen to each other's ideas supportively and respectfully.

**Role Play** tool.

### After

In the Take Away step of the session, adolescents can summarize strategies they think might work for facing challenges and how they might try to use them in their own lives. Keep the list of challenges identified by the adolescents for future discussion. Adolescents may find it helpful to explore the challenges they identified in this activity by exploring each of them in separate sessions, and/or taking more time to improve their role plays.

### Preparation

None needed.



## Our challenges, our solutions

1

Ask adolescents to sit together in pairs or groups of three.

2

**Facilitator says:**

"What are some of the challenges girls and boys your age experience in this community?"

3

Ask them to write or think of specific examples. Who is the most important person in your life right now?

4

At the top of the marker board write: BOYS BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS GIRLS (or draw pictures to represent those).

5

Ask the adolescents to share their ideas. Write their answers on the marker board (or draw pictures to show the challenges)

6

**Explain:**

Participants will choose one challenge that they would like to explore during the day's session. Ask three or four adolescents to volunteer to do a role play about the challenge. **(Alternative:** If adolescents are already familiar with role plays, organize all of them into groups of four or five, and each group can do a role play about a different challenge).

7

Ask one of the adolescents in the role play group to act the part of a boy/girl character facing the challenge they have chosen. Choose some characteristics for the character, including a name, an age and

8

anything else. (Do not use the real name of that boy or girl). Ask everyone else to suggest other characters in the role play. Ask questions such as: What other people might be involved in creating this challenge for this boy or girl? What other people might be part of this character's life? How should the drama start? Where should the main character be? What should he/she be doing?

9

Give a cue to the adolescents to start improvising their role play. Use the Role Play tool for ideas.

10

Repeat the role play two or three times, or more if the adolescents are still engaged. Suggest that the adolescents improvise with different characters, scenarios and strategies for facing the same challenge.

**Sharing and Take Away**

**Discussion:**

For the role plays:

- ▶ What were some of the strategies that these characters used to face their challenges?
- ▶ What resources and strengths did these characters have to face these challenges?
- ▶ Would these strategies work in real life? How can we adapt these strategies so that we can actually use them?



## Our challenges, our solutions

### Do & Don't

- ✓ Encourage adolescents to focus on basic challenges that young people like them face in their navigating their daily lives, not on broader political or economic problems that are difficult to resolve.
- ✓ Acknowledge and discuss the positive strategies that adolescents demonstrated during their role plays, and encourage adolescents to connect these to positive ways that they can face challenges in real life.
- ✓ Take immediate action if adolescents discuss serious threats to their safety or wellbeing.
- ✗ Encourage adolescents to discuss major challenges that are overwhelming or discouraging. This strong recommendation comes from facilitators who have tested this activity with adolescents affected by protracted conflict.
- ✗ Ask adolescents to discuss or reveal challenges they face in their own lives, or base the role plays on members of the circle or other real people in their community.
- ✗ Lecture or correct adolescents by telling them which strategies are right or wrong for addressing the identified challenge. Instead, base the discussion on the strategies they suggest or demonstrate through their role plays.

### Adaptation

**If adolescents already have experience creating role plays:** They may not need very much guidance, so just give them basic instructions and let them go ahead on their own.

### Environment

Indoor or outdoor space.

### Supplies

No supplies are needed for this activity, but adolescents may enjoy gathering materials to use as props in their role plays.

### Improvise

Adolescents can explore the challenges they face, and ways to address them through:

- ▶ Drawing, singing, storytelling, dancing or any other type of creative expression.
- ▶ Holding dialogue and discussions with adults to share their concerns and look for solutions together.

### Continue

Adolescents can use their learning about challenges to:

- ▶ Develop plans for group projects (especially during the Taking Action cycle).
- ▶ Design or imagine tools or inventions that can help them.
- ▶ Develop their role plays into longer plays, or other types of performances.
- ▶ Create drawings, posters or displays.

