

Youth Activity: Building Trust

Building Strong Relationships with RULER

Video 3

Note: This youth activity connects directly to the learning from [What Does Trust Mean to You](#) from Video 3 and is an iteration of that activity. For this reason, we suggest that your staff have viewed the video and completed the accompanying staff activities prior to facilitating this activity with youth.

Activity Summary: In this activity, youth will:

- Identify ways to build trust
- Illustrate how trust can be both earned and broken

Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Building materials (e.g. Legos, Post-Its, blocks, technology to create a visual structure)

Facilitator Directions

1. Say,

“Trust is hard to describe, but it’s something that many of us look for in our relationships. When we feel like we can trust people - our family, friends, teachers - we feel like we can count on them and that they make us feel safe. Trust can look like many things! For example, it could be a friend who always keeps your secret, a teacher who checks in on how you’re feeling each morning, or a family member who says goodnight every night before you go to sleep. It’s usually small, but important moments like this that build trust over time, like building a block tower. It’s not one block, but all the little blocks together that make us feel like we can trust someone. In the same way that we can build trust, block by block, trust can also be lost one block at a time or the tower can be tipped over, like when we feel like we can’t count on someone and their actions or words don’t make us feel safe.”

If materials are available, or developmentally appropriate, you can show youth physically building something up piece-by-piece, and knocking a structure down to illustrate

2. Give youth time to reflect on who they feel like they can trust in their life. Ask:

“What does that person say or do that makes you feel safe and like you can count on them?”

Allow youth to share who came to mind, and why they feel like they can trust them.

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Facilitator Directions

3. Explain that they are going to work together to build a trust tower(s), where everyone gets to add a “block” that represents what trust looks like to them (see examples on page 1). This is intended to be a collaborative, whole-group activity, but feel free to divide youth into smaller groups if needed. Structures can be a heart with Post-Its, a tall Lego tower, or a word cloud using technology. Get creative and use what you have available! If developmentally appropriate, allow youth to decide:

- Materials
- Product (what they will build)

4. Allow youth time to work together to build their trust structure(s). Once completed, allow each group to present, explain individual trust “blocks”, and share 3 things that would break their trust structure.

5. Debrief using the following questions:

- What does it mean to trust someone?
- How do you know you can trust someone? How can you build trust?
- How do you help others trust you?
- What causes distrust?