



Troubleshooting 4-H Club Problems

| Problem: Lack of Participation – Members do not participate in group activities. | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may not be interested in the activity or program. They may not understand the goals or the goals are inappropriate for members' ages, needs or interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve members in setting goals and in planning the program and activities Keep lines of communication open. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may feel insecure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let younger, inexperienced members serve on a committee where they can gain experience before being given a big assignment. Give each member responsibility for at least one important task. Promote a friendly, helpful group spirit – no one laughs or ridicules a person who “goofs”. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More aggressive members may not give others a chance to participate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a group goal that “everyone participates”. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may not know how to participate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach members how to perform the role or assignment if they don't know how. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting schedule may be in conflict with other activities/commitments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change meeting time to meet needs of the group. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may be forgetful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute club calendars to all members Use reminder phone calls (can be assigned to a member or parent.) |
| Problem: Lack of Interest in the Educational Program – Members only attend the social functions | |
| Factors | Suggestions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members do not identify their personal goals with those of the program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve members in setting up goals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may not have had a large enough role in planning the program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in close partnership with members to plan the programs they want |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may not find a satisfying role in carrying out the programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all members have challenging responsibilities that they can carry out successfully. Recognize members for their contributions |

Problem: Declining Membership – Members are dropping out; the group does not attract new members.

| Factors | Suggestions |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present members may be cliquish and fail to welcome prospective or new members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to improve atmosphere – make it warmer, more friendly • Help cliquish members to recognize the result of their behavior and work to make all members feel liked and wanted. • Give newer members responsibilities so they will have a role in the organization and feel important to the group. • Recognize members for what they do • Make a list of prospective members and extend friendly, personal invitations. • Invite prospects to go to a meeting with you. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program may not be of interest to current or prospective members or they may not know enough about it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure present and prospective members understand the purposes of the group. • Publicize the program and activities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some members or prospective members may not have a way to get to meetings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange car pools |

Problem: Disorderly Meetings – Meetings are disorganized or plagued by interruptions when members come late or change the topic of discussion.

| Factors | Suggestions |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group has fallen into bad habits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss problems openly with members but without placing blame. What standards do they want? • See the problems described above; any of these could cause disorderly meetings. • Review responsibilities of club officers and reinforce procedures. • Review and establish club expectations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members are coming late | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the meeting time • Open with the most attractive parts of the program • Run recreational activities as members arrive |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members may not know what is expected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage members to state their expectations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are not appropriately structured or are not well planned. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review information on planning and organizing meetings. |

Problem: Poor Group Relationships – There is bickering and jealousy among members; members want to run the show and feel that the adults dominate.

| Factors | Suggestions |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals may not understand their own motivation or that of others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss basic motivations – why people act as they do Work to develop mutual understanding and trust among members and between members and leaders; when a statement or behavior is inappropriate, ask, don't assume you know the reason behind it. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals cannot distinguish between differences in ideas and differences in personalities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept members as they are; don't make your approval and acceptance dependent upon their behavior. Help members to focus on what is being said, rather than who is saying it Focus on contribution and appreciation, "Your contribution counts." "We appreciate what you have done." |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals may feel insecure and therefore are excessively shy or aggressive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build self-confidence and feelings of worth by focusing on each member's assets and strengths. "I like the way you handled that," I appreciate what you did." Let the members know their worth. Recognize improvement and effort, not just accomplishment. Encourage cooperation rather than competition Focus on the member's ability to manage his or her life and make decisions. Do not anticipate failure. "I trust you to become responsible and independent." |

Problem: Lack of Parental Support – Parents don't attend meetings, parents don't encourage their children, and/or parents don't accept their own responsibilities.

| Factors | Suggestions |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents don't know what 4-H is all about and/or don't get timely information about club activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a club newsletter Hold parents' meetings Involve the entire family in the program planning process. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents don't have a role in the club meeting; they have not been asked to participate or have been left out of everything except the chores. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use "4-H Parent Interest Survey" to discover what parents are willing to contribute and then ask them. Create parent committees that meet at the same time the club meets. Create job descriptions and ask directly for specific leadership roles. |

Problem: Lack of Parental Support – Parents don't attend meetings, parents don't encourage their children, and/or don't accept their own responsibilities. (cont'd)

| Factors | Suggestions |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents don't understand the developmental needs of their children | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with parents about how specific 4-H projects and activities contribute to their children's development.• Inform parents about ways they can contribute to their child's success. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents have not been recognized or given credit for the work they've done. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank parents when you see them; call them when they've done a bit extra• Hold a parents' appreciation and recognition night. |