IDENTIFY ISSUES AND ASSETS

Session 6   **90 minutes**

OBJECTIVE:

Youth will identify the causes and effects of their selected community issue.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

• Butcher paper, tape, and markers.

• Paper, pens, and clipboards.

• Refer to the *Cause and Effect Concept Map Example* (Master Copy 3.6a).

• Copy the *Cause and Effect Concept Map* (Master Copy 3.6b) before the session: one copy for each participant. Another option: Provide each student with blank paper and pens to create a Cause and Effect Tree – each roots drawn represents a cause of problem and each branch represents a symptom.

I. OPENING: ATTENDANCE, SNACKS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGENDA OVERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Opening Circle Statement (Around the World): Something I have done that made a difference (e.g., can be large or small – smiled at a friend, raised money for a cause, worked out).

II. WARM UP: FREE ASSOCIATION (5 MINUTES)

In a circle, have someone start by saying a word, and go around with each person saying the first thing that comes to mind. Remind them to keep it appropriate!

III. BUT WHY? (45 MINUTES)

Review the community issues and assets that youth identified in the previous sessions, including the final issue(s) or topic(s) that youth selected. Explain that today you will try to identify the roots of this issue(s). Stress that the way to create change is to get to the root of the problem. Start with an example that explains the difference between a cause and an effect. (The flu is a good example: have youth identify what might cause someone to get the flu, and what are its effects or symptoms.)

Getting to the Root of the Problem

Step 1: Write a key issue or problem on the board or butcher paper. Now ask the students to say why this is a problem. Once they have brainstormed a list, pick one of the most salient causes they raised and then repeat the process for that particular cause. Do this at least one more time.

Step 2: Divide into pairs. Have each pair pick one of the causes from the last But Why? list you generated in the Step 1 brainstorm. Have one partner ask "Why" and have the other partner respond. This should continue until the root of the problem is reached. (Example: Girl is in the hospital. Why? She broke her leg. Why? She was fooling around on her bike. Why? Her friends told her she should try some new tricks. Why?) Have partners switch roles and switch causes from the list.

Step 3: Debrief with participants.

• How hard was it to get to the root of the problem? When did they know they had reached it? How can you tell a symptom from a cause? Are some things both causes and effects?

• What were some of the root causes that the pairs generated? Any similarities?

IV. ACTIVITY: CONCEPT MAPPING (20 MINUTES)

As a group, use answers from the But Why? activity, and lead the participants through a Causes and Effect Concept Map (or Tree). You can do this as an individual activity or as a full group. Questions as you proceed could include: Why do you think that? Tell me more. Can you give an example?

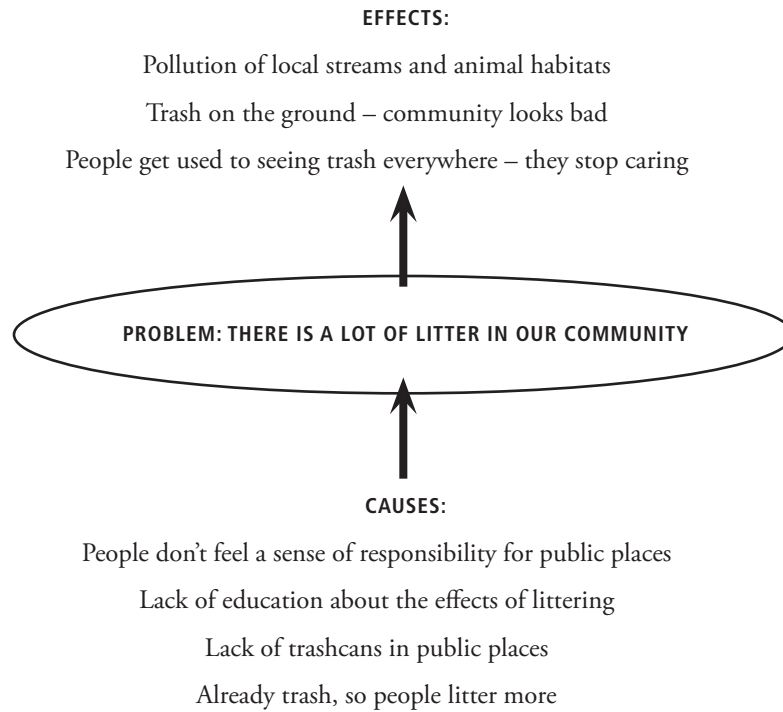• Encourage all responses, even if there is disagreement. Different perspectives are important.

V. CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Closing Circle Statement (Around the World): What did you learn from this activity?

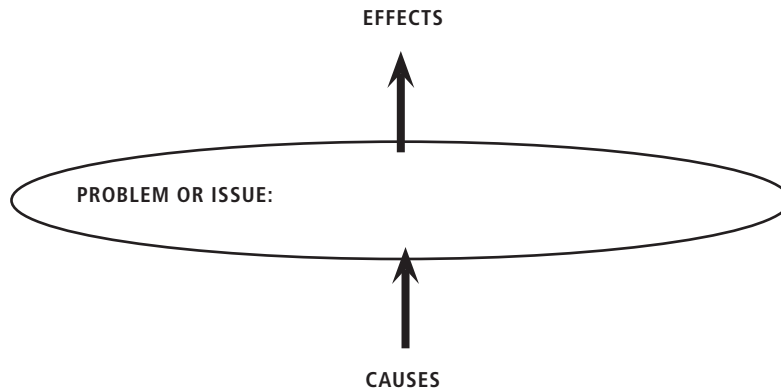*Another Approach: Roots and Branches*

On a large piece of paper, draw a tree with many roots and branches. Explain that the branches are the symptoms of the problem, and the roots are the causes of the problem. For example: For the issue of alcohol abuse, the branches could be bad grades, skipping school, violence, failed relationships, accidents, and falling down. The roots could be depression, stress, insecurity, and easy access. If you opt to use this model, encourage "sub-roots," or smaller roots that feed into the larger roots. For example, a sub-root of depression could be genetics, or a sub-root of easy access to alcohol could be lack of enforcement of laws against selling to minors.

Concept Map: Identifying Causes and Effects - Example

EFFECTS:

Pollution of local streams and animal habitats

Trash on the ground – community looks bad

People get used to seeing trash everywhere – they stop caring

↑

PROBLEM: THERE IS A LOT OF LITTER IN OUR COMMUNITY

↑

CAUSES:

People don't feel a sense of responsibility for public places

Lack of education about the effects of littering

Lack of trashcans in public places

Already trash, so people litter more

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

• Choose an issue or problem and write it in the middle of the paper.

• Above the problem or issue, write down all the things that happen as a result of this problem (**EFFECTS**).

• Below the problem or issue, write down all the things that lead to this problem or issue (**CAUSES**).

• Once you have written as many causes and effects as you can think of, underline the effect that you would MOST want to reduce or solve, and then underline the cause that you would MOST want to address.

Concept Map: Identifying Causes and Effects

EFFECTS

PROBLEM OR ISSUE:

CAUSES

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Choose an issue or problem and write it in the middle of the paper.
- Above the problem or issue, write down all of the things that happen as a result of this problem (**EFFECTS**).
- Below the problem or issue, write down all of the things that lead to this problem or issue (**CAUSES**).
- Once you have written as many causes and effects as you can think of, underline the effect that you would MOST want to reduce or solve, and then underline the cause that you would MOST want to address.