
Overview for Facilitators

This section covers the details that facilitators will need to focus on in planning and conducting Media-Smart Youth. It will give you a good understanding of the concepts behind the program—and it will help you make the most of your time and your skills. Take some time to review this information now, and refer to it often as you prepare for each lesson. Also, take a look at *Appendix F: Resources to Support Planning and Implementation*, which includes a materials checklist and tips that were collected from a diverse group of Media-Smart Youth facilitators who were eager to share what they learned about guiding youth through the curriculum.

Focusing on the Lessons

The Media-Smart Youth lessons follow a simple and consistent structure and format: an opening activity, a *Snack Break*, a second activity, an *Action Break*, a third activity called a *Mini-Production*, and a short *Finishing Up the Lesson* section. Each lesson also ends with *Take Home a New Idea!* and *Tips for Media-Smart Parents* sheets.

The only variation from this structure is in *Lesson 5*, which focuses on physical activity. *Lesson 5* provides youth with an opportunity to be active during the lesson activity itself, so it does not include a separate *Action Break*.

The structure and content of each lesson is designed to guide you through the session step by step. The **Opening Page** of each lesson includes an overall summary of what's to come, including:

- The length of the lesson
- An overview of the lesson content
- Learning objectives for the lesson (to help you stay on track and to evaluate success)

- A list of all the lesson’s activities and how much time is suggested for each
- A list of materials you will need for the activities, *Snack Break*, and *Action Break*
- A Facilitator’s Preparation List, which suggests steps to do ahead of time to help the lesson go smoothly

Activity A and Activity B are the core content segments. These activities are designed to be carried out quickly—usually in 20 to 30 minutes each—to keep youth energized and interested. You may find that some activities lend themselves to in-depth discussions that may take more than the recommended time. Stay alert to the participants’ needs and their reactions. You want to keep youth engaged and interested, but you also want to cover all the material in each lesson.

Activity C is the *Mini-Production*, in which youth use the skills they have learned in the lesson to create a simple media product, such as a blog, an online page for a social networking site, a jingle, a skit, or a billboard. Although several *Mini-Production* activities focus on digital media, the actual work involved uses paper and pencil and does not require a computer or technology expertise. All *Mini-Production* handouts and tools are included at the end of each lesson on sheets that can be photocopied in black and white.

Each lesson includes a corresponding **Media-Smart Youth DVD** segment (with the exception of *Lesson 3* and *Lesson 6*). Whether or not you use the DVD, and how you use it, is up to you. The DVD and lesson content complement each other, so if you choose to not use the DVD, its main points are covered in the existing lesson content. If you have extra time and want to present both the lesson content and the DVD segment, you may do that, too. Each lesson has a specific point at which the DVD may be viewed (usually during *Activity A* or *Activity B*). The icon (see left) in the text margin indicates when to show the DVD.



If you choose to use the DVD segments to complement the lesson content, you will need equipment to play and show the DVD. You might use a DVD player and a TV, a computer with DVD capabilities, a portable DVD player, or other equipment. Because of the multiple possibilities, this guide includes the following general language in the *Materials Needed* and the *Facilitator’s Preparation* sections of lessons and activities that use the DVD: “Equipment to play and show a DVD.” When you see that language, you can secure the equipment needed/available for showing the DVD.

The **Snack Break** is a simple, nutritious treat that comes after *Activity A*. The recommended time for this break is 10 minutes.

The **Action Break** gives the youth a chance to get active and energized after *Activity B*. The recommended time for this break is also 10 minutes.

And last, but not least, **Finishing Up the Lesson** gives you the chance to wrap up by asking youth to share one or more fun and interesting things they learned during the lesson. The curriculum lists several key points to listen for, but you should let youth describe what they have learned in their own words. Each *Finishing Up* section also includes *Take Home a New Idea!* and *Tips for Media-Smart Parents* sheets. These sheets give youth an opportunity to share at home what they have learned in the program. It is a great way to engage family members and reinforce program concepts. The youth's *Take Home a New Idea!* sheet also includes the recipe from the session's *Snack Break*, so they can try it at home with family and friends.

Focusing on the Big Production

The *Big Production*, which takes place after the youth have completed all 10 lessons, is a media product created by participants for other young people in their age group. These *Big Productions* are likely to appeal to slightly younger ages as well. The purpose of a *Big Production* is to motivate others to take a specific action for better nutrition or increased physical activity. *Big Productions* may be relatively simple—such as a store window display or a school newspaper article—or more complex, such as a blog or website banner, a video, or a physical activity event to raise money for a local charity.

Planning and carrying out the *Big Production* can take anywhere from 1 day to a few weeks or months—it all depends on the project. You and your media partner (if you choose to use one) will have to work together to set realistic timelines for developing the product, sharing it among small groups, providing and soliciting feedback, revising the product, and producing it for distribution. *Appendix G* and *Appendix H* contain information, guidance, and tools to help you plan for and carry out a successful and fun *Big Production*.

Facilitating the Lessons

Media-Smart Youth lessons are designed to make it as easy as possible for you to conduct the lessons. Here are just a few of the techniques we've used.

Visual Aids

The pages of the Media-Smart Youth curriculum are filled with visual aids to help make facilitating easier.

Colorful icons make it easy to find exactly what you're looking for:



appears on the front page of the lesson next to the list of lesson activities



indicates the suggested length of time for an activity



indicates the content overview for a lesson or an activity



indicates the learning objectives of a lesson or activity



indicates any facilitator's preparation that may be needed



indicates any materials or supplies needed



indicates a time to be sensitive to issues related to cultural or ethnic identity or an opportunity to tailor an activity to reflect and celebrate the diverse identities within the group

* A Note About...

Highlighted boxes provide important background information and teaching suggestions at appropriate places in the lessons.



appears next to italicized text that you can read to the youth as written or paraphrase



indicates when to show a Media-Smart Youth DVD segment



appears next to the *Snack Break*



appears next to the *Action Break* and next to other times youth are being active or have the potential to be active



indicates when it's time to finish up the lesson

6 Media Questions Poster

The **6 Media Questions Poster** is included with the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. This poster is a tool to help young people analyze and create media. You will want to post it in a prominent place in the room when this topic is introduced in *Lesson 3* and for each of the remaining lessons of the curriculum.

Words and Phrases with Special Meaning

Throughout the Media-Smart Youth curriculum, you will find recurring words and phrases that have a particular meaning.

For example, when Media-Smart Youth refers to **physical activity**, it means *anything* that gets a person moving, such as jumping rope, playing basketball, walking, and carrying groceries. Physical activity does not have to be strenuous and does not have to be part of a structured program of exercise.

You'll often see the phrase "**LISTEN to ideas from youth. If necessary, GUIDE them to the following responses**" as part of the facilitator's directions. This phrase indicates where and how you might help move the discussion in a certain direction. In some cases, the list under this phrase includes examples of potential answers. In other cases, the list includes

specific content that youth should learn. This convention is used to stimulate discussion so that you aren't always just lecturing to the youth, but rather are engaging them in a guided discussion. Use your imagination for good ways to guide the discussion with open-ended questions (such as "What about...", "Have you thought of...", and "Can you think of other ways, such as..."). For more information on asking open-ended questions, see *Lead with Open-Ended Questions*, later in this section (pages 33 and 34).

Throughout the lessons, the term **flipchart** paper refers to any kind of large sheets of paper, oversize newsprint, or large pads that are commonly used for group training. Youth will use these sheets in many activities, and the flipchart paper will be helpful to you when you want to write down key points from discussions. These sheets are available in most office supply or arts and crafts supply stores.

To energize critical thinking skills, the lessons often call for **brainstorming**. These "brain dumps" are a great way to encourage all the youth to participate in a nonjudgmental and freeform way. You will be surprised at the thoughtful and creative ideas that emerge during a brainstorm!

One final and all-important term: **snack**. Snacks are sometimes frowned upon because they are associated with high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks. Media-Smart Youth has a different take on this concept. Snacks can be part of a healthy diet, and the key to choosing snacks—as with any other food—is to make healthy choices with nutrition in mind. Each lesson includes a delicious and nutritious snack that echoes the concepts described in the lessons. Keep in mind that these breaks are snacks, not meals, so pay attention to how much food you provide. Controlling how much food you provide also will help you manage your budget.

The nutrition information in Media-Smart Youth focuses largely on snacks for several reasons:

- Many youth have more control over their snack choices than over their meal choices, which may be planned and prepared by other family members or school cafeteria staff.
- Youth often eat snacks after school, and this curriculum is well suited for after-school settings.

Media-Smart Youth teaches youth how to make smart snack choices.

Getting Ready To Lead a Lesson

You will find that planning and preparing before each lesson will save valuable time and help increase your confidence about facilitating. Every lesson tells you exactly what you need to do to carry it out. Here is a general checklist to help you prepare.

Review the Lesson

Become familiar with the content and timing of activities and breaks. The more you know ahead of time, the more comfortable you will feel when leading the lesson. Remember, the length of time listed is only a suggestion. Feel free to adjust the time to suit your group's needs—and don't forget setup and cleanup.

Gather or Shop for Materials

Media-Smart Youth uses a limited number of materials—such as markers and paper—that are usually readily available. You can put aside some materials at the beginning of the program for use throughout the lessons (see *A Suggested Shopping/Gathering List* on page 29). Other supplies and equipment—such as a cell phone camera, DVD player, or tape recorder—are not required, but may add extra value to activities. Your media partner or others in the community may be able to provide, or contribute toward, some materials. Keep in mind that although several *Mini-Productions* focus on digital media, these activities involve paper and pencil and do not require a computer or technology expertise.

Suggested Shopping/Gathering List

A few materials are used in every lesson or *Snack Break*. You may want to gather or buy enough of these items to last throughout the program.

For Activities

- Flipchart paper
- Easel (if desired)
- Colored markers and pens
- Masking tape
- Pens and pencils
- Watch or timer

For Snacks

- Drinks (water, seltzer, fat-free or low-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice)
- Paper plates
- Paper bowls
- Paper napkins
- Cups
- Plastic knives and spoons
- Sink or bathroom for hand washing, or alcohol-based (60%) hand sanitizer

Create a Comfortable Environment

Evaluate your meeting space. Is it too hot or cold? Is it the right size and shape? Is the lighting appropriate for the activity? Is noise a problem? Ensure that the atmosphere is right. Set up the room to maximize youths' interaction and enjoyment of the lesson. Be creative! Classroom-style seating may be too "school-like" for youth to feel relaxed; desks may be a barrier, too. Consider a circle or semicircle of chairs, or let young people sit on the floor. Change seating arrangements from lesson to lesson and within lessons to keep young people engaged.

Consider Your Participants

Some groups are more energetic than others. They might want lots of action and competition between teams. Others groups are quieter. They might prefer more pencil-and-paper activities, more cooperative group activities, and less competition. Some youth have no difficulties sharing their thoughts and being active in front of peers. Other youth may be less comfortable sharing. Consider the nature of your group and of individual youth, and adapt the activities to suit them. *Appendix B* includes suggestions for adapting activities for youth with disabilities.

Make the Most of the Diversity of Your Participants



The lessons provide many opportunities for you to recognize and celebrate the richness and diversity of the cultures and ethnicities represented in your group. Adapt the discussions and activities as needed to reflect the identities of the group. The *Mini-Productions* may be a particularly good opportunity for youth to showcase their heritages through the media they create. At the same time, be alert to any instances when highlighting cultural or ethnic identity may be inappropriate or uncomfortable for the youth. Throughout the lessons, we've included an icon (see left) to note times where you might want to highlight or be sensitive to issues related to cultural or ethnic identity.

Prepare for *Snack Breaks*

All snacks are intended to be simple and to illustrate a different nutrition concept, but they are just suggestions. Feel free to modify snacks for your group. Would you like to include special cultural or ethnic foods? Do you need to consider allergies or dietary needs? Do you need a cooler, refrigerator, or freezer? Do you have everything you need for cleanup? Do you have a sink or bathroom nearby for hand washing? Decide what you need and want, or look at more snack options—including ideas that don't require refrigeration—in *Appendix C*.

* Many after-school programs qualify for federal reimbursement for snacks if they participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program or Child and Adult Care Food Program. To see whether your Media-Smart Youth snack costs could qualify for reimbursement, visit the USDA website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/Default.htm>.

Deciding Whether To Work with Other Facilitators

You may wish to work with other adult facilitators as you carry out the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. Involving others in the lessons can be invaluable to your program and to the young people. When making this decision, consider some of the benefits and challenges. Determine the best equation for your group.

Multiple Facilitators	
Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Help youth stay focused■ Help the sessions run smoothly■ Bring diversity of ideas■ Involve community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Show different facilitation styles■ Use different approaches with youth■ Have different attitudes about discipline

You may decide that the advantages of working with another facilitator outweigh the disadvantages. If so, follow these guidelines to maximize success.

All facilitators should:

- Review and become familiar with the full curriculum.
- Discuss and determine respective roles and responsibilities.
- Agree on facilitation and discipline techniques.
- Meet or talk before each lesson to prepare and divide planning and facilitation duties.
- Get together after each lesson to discuss what worked and what might be improved next time.
- Respect each other's differences and individual strengths.
- Be supportive.
- Be flexible.

Why Small Groups?

Small groups provide participants with more opportunities to practice skills, share thoughts, work cooperatively, and actively observe others. As a result, they can more easily:

- Establish common ground and provide the foundation for finding solutions together.
- Cultivate support, which can enhance self-esteem.
- Acquire new skills.
- Improve performance through immediate feedback.
- Learn and become motivated.

Making the Most of Your Facilitation

The Media-Smart Youth curriculum uses several key strategies to facilitate critical thinking and encourage discussion. The activities encourage youth to explore questions, answers, and possible connections. The point is for them to work together to share information and solve problems. Here are a few skills that you can develop to help make that happen.

Model Open and Nonjudgmental Behavior

In *Lesson 1*, participants develop a working agreement that governs their participation in the group. Throughout the program, encourage the young people to accept and follow that agreement. But don't forget *your* behavior with, and reactions to, the group. Your actions can go a long way toward setting the right example.

Encourage Small-Group Work

To increase participation, youth work in small groups for many of the activities, and then come back together as a whole group to share their discussions and results. As part of your planning for each lesson, you may want to decide how you will divide the youth into groups for these activities.

Handle Sensitive Issues Sensitive

The Media-Smart Youth curriculum is not about weight loss, dieting, or forcing anyone to do physical activity. However, this curriculum addresses nutrition and physical activity—two important “body issues”—and it is designed to promote and encourage critical thinking and discussion. As a result, personal, sensitive, or uncomfortable topics may occasionally arise.

You should try to anticipate and prepare for these situations. Before beginning the program, discuss with the leadership of your organization how you might address such potentially difficult situations. During the program, be sure to create an accepting environment where everyone feels comfortable participating and safe in expressing their thoughts.

Ideas To Consider When Sensitive Issues Arise

- If you know the answer to a question, share it briefly. If not, acknowledge the importance of the issue, and explain that you will try to find the answer after the lesson.
- Don't insist that a young person participate in a discussion or physical activity if he or she seems uncomfortable. Don't allow other participants to tease or pressure the young person.
- Try to redirect the discussion back to the original topic if the talk leads in an uncomfortable direction.
- Consider asking participants to talk with you or another trusted adult after the lesson.
- Ask participants to find out more on their own and report back to the group at a later session.
- Model respect for *all* sensitive issues and special needs, including intellectual and physical disabilities, food allergies, or dietary needs. Make sure that participants respect each other.
- Honor—and support—cultural and economic differences, some of which can greatly influence nutrition and activity choices and body image attitudes.

Lead with Open-Ended Questions

Many activities begin and end with a group discussion that prompts the young people to: reflect on their own experiences, opinions, and ideas; think about answers to their own questions; and share knowledge. You can start and keep the discussion going by using open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are ones that get people talking. They often start with “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how.” In contrast, closed-ended questions are questions that can be answered by “yes” or “no,” and that often do not require additional discussion.

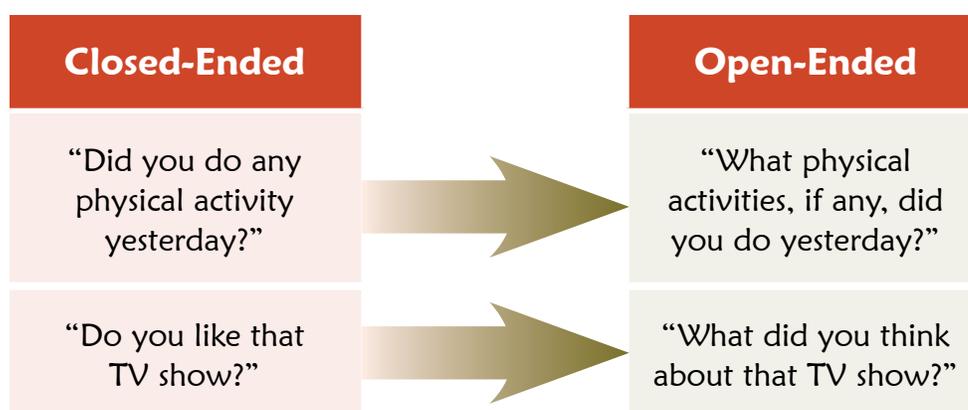
Be sure to:

- Acknowledge positive behaviors frequently.
- Give encouragement and compliments.
- Demonstrate respect for participants and their beliefs.
- Be clear about how you expect group members to treat each other, and model this behavior yourself.
- Respect participants' feelings and boundaries.
- Model cooperative behavior.
- Demonstrate concepts and examples when possible.
- Participate in the games and competitions when possible.
- Use simple language.
- Encourage group members to share experiences.
- Build on strengths.
- Listen!
- Let group members react, think, and analyze.
- Be flexible and enthusiastic.

Here are some examples of open-ended questions:

- “What do you mean by...?”
- “What kind of fruits do you like?”
- “When is it easy for you to be physically active?”
- “How did you figure out that this food contains whole grains?”
- “Can you tell me more about...?”

Here are some ways to turn closed-ended questions into open-ended ones:



Lead by Example

Young people will be more motivated to fully participate in the active parts of the curriculum if you are part of the fun. Dress in casual clothes and appropriate shoes, and join in the activities and *Action Breaks*. If you ask the group to run to the other end of the room as part of an activity, do it yourself first. Be energetic and animated! Remember, model the active behavior you are encouraging. You may be surprised at how positively the group responds.

Make the Lessons Fun—and Relevant

Try to avoid using the word “class” during lessons. Mentioning the “classroom” or asking the “class” to pay attention may make the activity feel too much like school for the youth.

If you notice that the youth are restless or bored, take a minute or 2 to do a physical activity. Even a short activity will get their hearts pumping and their adrenaline going. Short spurts of activity will bring their focus back to the curriculum and offer them a nice break. Ask them to stand and do jumping jacks for 60 seconds without stopping. Or turn on some music, and suggest they dance in place.

Incorporate current events into your discussion. If you meet the weekend after a major news event, discuss how the event was covered in the media (Internet, TV, print, or radio). Or, if a new movie is about to come out, see what youth think about the various marketing activities associated with the movie's release and if they've taken part in any of them.

Young people enjoy seeing themselves. Photograph or videotape the youth in action during the Media-Smart Youth activities. Create and bring a photo collage to the next lesson or play the taped footage.

Encourage Active Participation and Leadership

Media-Smart Youth provides many opportunities to help youth build confidence, encourage leadership, and give them the feeling that this program is *theirs*. Take full advantage of every chance to ask for volunteers and get participants involved in facilitating parts of lessons. A few of the participants will likely assume these roles naturally, some will be able to do so with coaching and guidance, and others will prefer to remain in the background.

Your efforts to make the environment as nurturing as possible will encourage the quieter youth to step into leadership roles.

Make Transitions

A big part of your role is to help youth see the relationships among all the activities and lessons. A skilled facilitator is prepared to summarize each activity and transition to the next one. A summary gives the participants a quick recap of the main points of the activity, while the transition relates those points to upcoming activities.

Ways To Involve Young People

Ask them to:

- Hand out materials.
- Take notes.
- Time activities.
- Lead activities.
- Encourage others in a group.
- Report to the group.
- Help prepare snacks.
- Help lead *Action Breaks*.
- Your ideas here!

To Summarize an Activity:

- State the main point of the activity.
- Ask the group for its ideas.
- Acknowledge the group's hard work.
- Congratulate the group for its good ideas.

To Transition to the Next Activity:

- Tell how this point or activity is related to the next.
- Use only one or two sentences.

Here's an example of a transition:

You've learned all about Media-Smart Youth.

You're ready, and you're set.

Now, GO...

and make your Media-Smart Youth workshop terrific!