



A Youth Leadership Guide for 4-H Club Meetings

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Club meetings are an important part of the 4-H experience. Meetings are a place for members to get to know one another and to share ideas. They are a place to make plans, learn, and have fun.

During meetings, members have the opportunity to participate in decision making. They develop self-confidence, enhance their speaking abilities, and gain leadership skills.

Exciting meetings capture the interest of the members. Youth want to be involved and be active participants.

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This guide will help you plan and conduct meetings that will stimulate and engage your club's members.

Leadership structure

There is no “right” way to structure the leadership of a club. Each group must decide what works best for its members.

Clubs often elect officers to plan and run meetings. Meetings run more smoothly when the officers understand their roles. Officers should refer to the *4-H Club Officer Handbook* (4-H 600-01) to learn their specific responsibilities.

While the majority of clubs have officers, some may choose a different leadership structure. A new club with very young members may have an adult volunteer take a larger leadership role than in older, more established clubs. A group of older youth in an ambassador 4-H club may decide on a shared leadership structure.



A club may have officers and also have junior leaders to help plan and conduct activities. Junior leaders may serve as officers. (See *Leading the Way—4-H Junior Leader Project Member Handbook* [4-H 6520])

Whatever leadership structure your club decides on, it is important that all people with a leadership role work together as a team to plan and run the meetings.

4-H grows true leaders

Any 4-H'er can become a leader, and those who are leaders can always improve their skills.

True leaders:

- ◆ Acquire teamwork and group building skills
- ◆ Assume responsibility for actions and never blame others
- ◆ Follow through on goals
- ◆ Teach, mentor, and support younger members
- ◆ Identify problems and develop action plans to solve them
- ◆ Work on improving their written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills
- ◆ Are kind, patient, caring, and helpful to others
- ◆ Accept others for who they are and don't judge people for what they may or may not do
- ◆ Are confident without being pushy
- ◆ Know how and when to delegate
- ◆ Stay positive even when things go wrong
- ◆ Are active listeners
- ◆ Have a passion for what they do and inspire others
- ◆ Lead by example and always strive to do their best
- ◆ Practice self-reflection

Use of committees

If your club is large or if you have a lot of activities during the year, you might want to form committees to share some of the responsibilities. Committees are useful to deal with certain issues or plan specific events without involving the entire club. Some common purposes for forming committees are to:

- ◆ Plan the year's schedule
- ◆ Plan educational programs
- ◆ Organize a fundraising event
- ◆ Organize a field trip
- ◆ Plan a club party
- ◆ Arrange for guest speakers

If you decide to form a committee, give the club members a description of the job to be done and then ask who would be interested in serving. Select an appropriate number of people for the task, being sure to not always select the same people. Give the committee all the necessary information, and then give them the responsibility for getting the job done.

The committee should gather information, develop plans, and then report back to the club. The committee worksheet may be helpful (page 8). If spending or earning money is involved, the committee or a committee member should consult with the treasurer, the adult volunteer, and the county 4-H staff if fundraising occurs.

When the task is completed, be sure to give the committee members credit for the work they did. An evaluation of their work is always a good idea.

The president serves as an ex-officio member of all committees, but should not serve as the chair. If there is a programs committee, the vice president serves as the chair.

Ex-officio means the committee members are not necessarily elected or appointed—they agree to serve in a position because the committee needs their expertise or influence.

Yearly and monthly calendars

At the beginning of the 4-H year, in October, all members of the club's leadership team should meet to develop a yearly calendar of activities. The calendar might need to be adjusted during the year, but it's good to have an overall idea of when things will happen, the topics the group would like to cover, and the goals they would like to achieve.

Having a yearly calendar helps families with their schedules and time management. It also helps new members and their parents know the events and dates to which they are committing. Knowing the schedule in advance is a way to create transparency and make sure everyone in the club has the same information.

Providing a monthly calendar for members is also extremely useful. This can be distributed a month or two ahead of time and will have the most updated information. If you leave

some space to write on the calendar, it can be a convenient place for members to make notes and keep track of things they will need to put in their records.

It's best to involve the entire club in the planning process. Being a part of the planning process creates greater interest and can result in shared commitment to and responsibility for the success of the club's program.

Establish regular days and times for meetings and try to not change those. Make sure that during the year you have scheduled project time, community service, and recreation. How often should you have meetings? It is recommended that clubs meet at least six times during the year. Some meet many more times than that. Your club should decide together whether to meet weekly, monthly, twice a month, or every other month. Don't just meet to fill your quota of meetings. Everyone is busy, so make sure there is a purpose to your meetings, keeping the goals of the 4-H program in mind. See the sample yearly calendar, page 9.

Group agreements

It is important that all of the 4-H members and parents/guardians understand the expectations of membership in the 4-H club, as well as the consequences of not meeting those expectations. When club members themselves help generate these expectations, they tend to be more committed to upholding them.

At your first meeting, ask members what they think the expectations should be and record them on chart paper. You may need to help generate ideas. You can also include some expectations for parents/guardians and leaders. And you may need to supply some basic safety requirements.

After discussion, have the group vote to approve what they have all agreed to. It's a good idea to write these up in an agreement form and have both the club members and their parents/guardians sign it. Sharing information up front this way makes it easier for everyone to meet and comply with the expectations. See sample group agreements, page 10.

Types of meetings

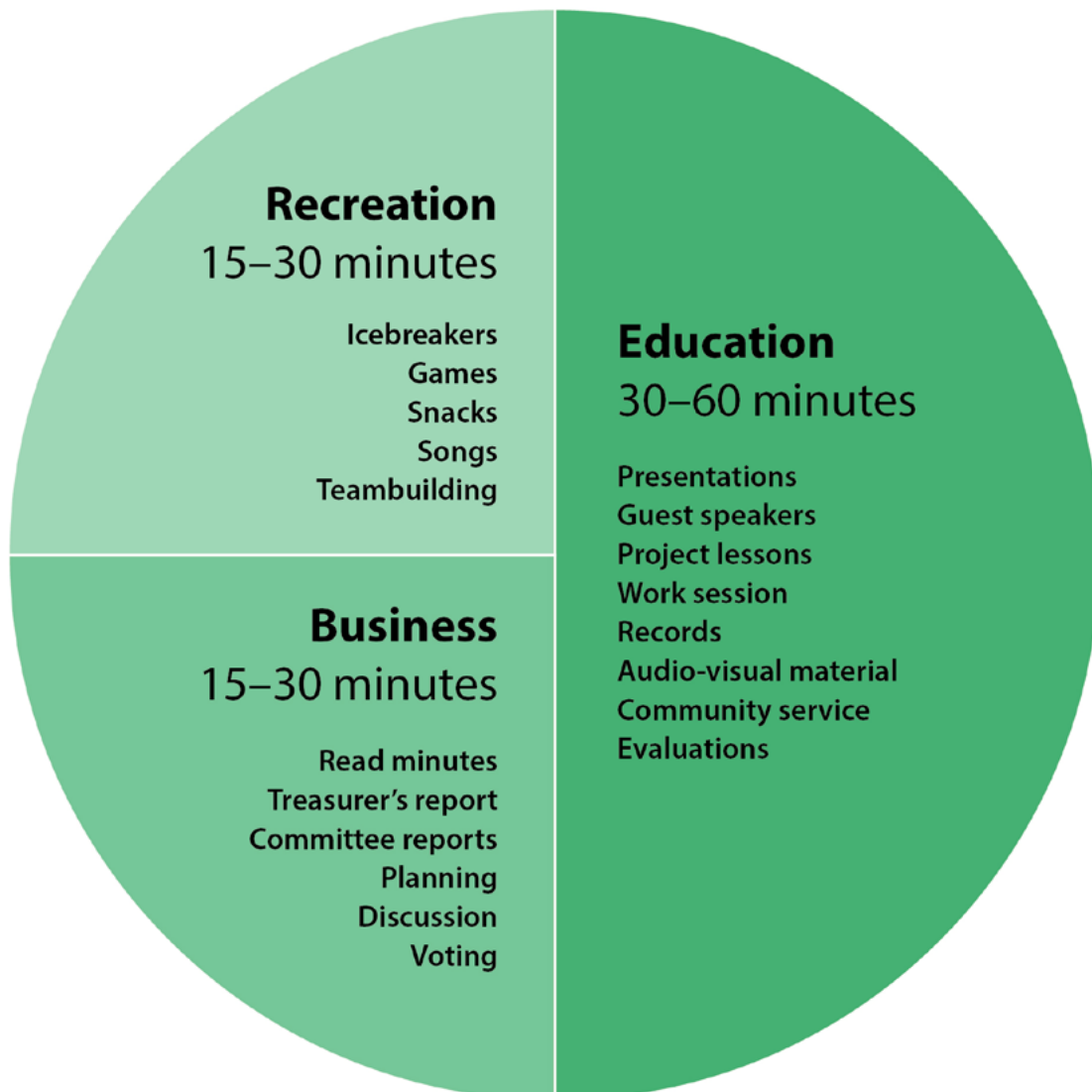
Typically, there are three kinds of meeting.

1. Business meetings: These are where you plan events, read minutes, have treasurer and committee reports, vote on decisions, and introduce guests.
2. Project meetings: These are where you learn and practice skills related to your project area, and give demonstrations or talks.
3. Activities: These could include conducting a community service project, taking a tour or field trip, or doing a team-building exercise.

These meeting types can be combined in a variety of ways. Some clubs alternate business meetings with project meetings. Some have short business meetings every time they meet. You will need to determine what works best for your club depending on the age of your members, the size of the club, and the project area(s).

A typical 4-H meeting lasts one to two hours and has three parts: business, education, and recreation. The business portion should be no more than 15 to 30 minutes. The educational section can go for 30 to 60 minutes, and the recreation time for 15 to 30 minutes. See also the sample meeting agenda on page 5.

Suggested plan for a 4-H meeting



Sample meeting agenda

1. Call to order
2. U.S. Pledge of Allegiance
3. 4-H pledge
4. Introductions and roll call
5. Reading of minutes from previous meeting
6. Reading of club correspondence
7. Treasurer's report
8. Other officer reports (if needed)
9. Committee reports (if needed)
10. Old business
11. New business
12. Program
13. Educational component
14. Presentations by members
15. Guest speaker
16. Service learning
17. Update
18. Recreation
19. Refreshments
20. Announcements and reminders
21. Adjourn

Preparing for meetings

Good meetings don't just happen. The key to effective meetings is preparing for them in advance. Follow these steps:

1. Meet with all club officers and adult volunteers to plan the agenda for the meeting. Make sure you allow enough time for each item on the agenda.
2. Look at past minutes to make sure you include any old business, tabled motions, or action items.
3. Determine who is responsible for each item on the agenda. (Some items, such as leading the pledges, can be selected at the meeting.)

4. If materials or equipment are needed, decide who is responsible for providing them.
5. Confirm that the meeting location is adequate for the activities planned.
6. Contact every person who has a responsibility at the meeting to confirm they know what they need to do.
7. Remind all club members about the time and location of the meeting. Make sure they know if they have to bring anything or prepare anything. (This is usually done by the club secretary or a calling/emailing/texting committee.)

The meeting agenda planning worksheet on page 11 may help you prepare for meetings.

Running the meeting effectively

Many factors contribute to holding a good meeting. Here are a few to keep in mind:

- ◆ Start and end the meeting on time.
- ◆ Follow the planned agenda.
- ◆ Stay focused—don't get sidetracked.
- ◆ Make sure only one person talks at a time during discussions.
- ◆ Involve everyone in discussions. Don't let any one person dominate. Call on people you haven't heard from.
- ◆ Maintain a helpful, positive attitude.
- ◆ Make sure everyone feels welcome and is treated with courtesy and respect.
- ◆ Use basic Parliamentary Procedures (see "Basic Parliamentary Procedure for 4-H Clubs," pages 12–13.)

No matter how well you plan or how skilled you are at leadership, you may still encounter problems. Never be afraid to ask for help from adult volunteers or 4-H staff. It is better to address problems immediately instead of letting them fester and get worse.

Put a spark in your meetings

Make routine things fun! For example, instead of just calling the roll each meeting, add a different twist each time. As you call each club member's name, do one of the following:

- ◆ Ask what their favorite ice cream, candy bar, color, or movie is.
- ◆ Prepare a jar of jelly beans and ask them to estimate the number in the jar. Give a prize to whoever comes closest.
- ◆ Ask what they like best about where they live.
- ◆ Have them compliment the next person on the roll call.

Use your imagination to come up with something unique to maintain enthusiasm.

Variety keeps meetings interesting. Think of different ways you can present material. Remember that 4-H is about “learning by doing.” The more you can make educational activities “hands on,” the better. As much as possible, use the Experiential Learning Model (page 14).

Note: While having variety in the way you present material is good, it is also good to have a consistent **structure** to your meetings. In other words, follow the same format for your meetings such as the suggested agenda. Having this consistency lets club members know what to expect and to become more comfortable with the process. When they are more comfortable, they will be more likely to participate in discussions, be engaged in what they are doing, and develop a stronger sense of belonging.

Following are just a few ideas of different things you could do to add variety to your meetings:

- ◆ Tours and field trips: Members will enjoy getting out and seeing something different, and they often learn more on a field trip than in a regular meeting.
- ◆ Guest speaker: It's always good to hear from new people and get different ideas. Invite someone to talk to your club and lead a special activity. This could be project related, but you could also invite someone who has attended a national event or gone on an international exchange to talk about their experience.

- ◆ Club exchange: Invite another club to visit your club for a meeting, and then your club attends one of their meetings.
- ◆ Favorite game night: Have members bring their favorite short game to share. Playing together can help members learn to work together.
- ◆ Presentation meeting: Have all club members give a presentation. Have several impromptu topics ready for those who don't have a formal presentation.
- ◆ Web search: Help members learn to use the internet to find answers to prepared questions or research a topic they are interested in. Teach about credible sources.



- ◆ Study sessions: Plan a pizza party while studying for a judging contest or bowl games
- ◆ Holiday parties: Plan a meeting around a holiday theme. Be sensitive to personal religious beliefs and different cultures. Invite the whole family.
- ◆ Parent night: Ask parents to be in charge of an activity or to participate in an activity. This could be serious or humorous.
- ◆ Officer experience night: Officers coach younger 4-H members to perform the duties of the officers for the meeting
- ◆ Family picnics: Invite the families of all members to a picnic or other event. Plan activities so everyone gets to know each other.
- ◆ Recognition night: Hold a meeting where you give out awards or other recognition to your club members. Make sure everyone receives something.

Evaluate your meetings

It's best to evaluate your meetings as soon as possible after they are done. This can help improve future meetings. The following chart can help with your evaluation.

Item	Yes/No	What could be improved?
Was an agenda prepared ahead of time?		
Was there adequate time for each item on the agenda?		
Did the meeting start and end on time?		
Was everyone prepared for their part of the meeting?		
Did the group stay focused and on task?		
Did everyone participate?		
Was the meeting space and material adequate?		
Did everyone demonstrate respect for one another?		
Did the program provide an opportunity for learning?		
Was everyone kept interested?		
Were action items assigned with due dates?		
Were minutes shared and kept?		
Was the treasurer's report up to date?		

Sample yearly plan for a horse club

Month	Business meeting	Riding meeting
October	Pass out calendars Fill out enrollment forms Collect fees Pass out record books and project books Discuss fall care of horses Assign breed reports	2 rides at fairgrounds Discuss rules and etiquette Work on showmanship
November	Pass out calendars Members give breed reports Plan Thanksgiving food drive Plan slumber party for practicing Horse Bowl	1 ride at fairgrounds: work on trail County clinic with dressage instructor
December	Pass out calendars Have holiday family potluck Adopt-a-family for Christmas	1 ride at fairgrounds: work on Western Equitation
January	Pass out calendars Discuss winter care of horses Learn about presentations: have members choose topics	1 ride at fairgrounds: work on English Equitation
February	Pass out calendars Have members give update on presentations Guest speaker: veterinarian	2 rides at fairgrounds: work on Advancements and patterns
March	Pass out calendars Members give presentations	1 ride at fairgrounds: work on Advancements County clinic on gaming
April	Pass out calendars Discuss spring care of horses Work on advancements & records	Trail practice at fairgrounds County clinic on showmanship
May	Pass out calendars Practice judging & oral reasons Fill out pre-fair entries	Practice patterns at fairgrounds Work on advancements
June	Pass out calendars Discuss summer care of horses Work on advancements & records Fair planning and entries	Practice for fair at fairgrounds: hold "play show"
July	Pass out calendars Plan club trail ride	Use pre-fair comment sheets to practice for fair
August	State Fair meeting	Overnight trail/camping trip
September	Volunteer at animal shelter	Beach ride

Sample group agreements

For youth:

I agree to meet the following expectations of my 4-H club:

- ◆ Be courteous and fair to everyone
- ◆ Attend as many club meetings as possible; if unable to attend, I will contact a club leader before the event
- ◆ Participate in program activities
- ◆ Respect all adult and youth volunteers
- ◆ Follow through on my commitments
- ◆ Keep myself informed about 4-H activities, events, and programs
- ◆ Use appropriate language
- ◆ Be honest and ethical
- ◆ Read and use 4-H publications related to my project area(s)

Signature of club member

Date

For parents/guardians:

I agree to meet the following expectations of the 4-H program:

- ◆ Provide transportation for my child to and from meetings and events
- ◆ Provide any financial support needed for my child's project work
- ◆ Supervise and encourage my child but not do his/her work
- ◆ Understand and support 4-H philosophy
- ◆ Be supportive of **all** club members
- ◆ Attend as many meetings/events as possible with my child
- ◆ Assist with club activities as needed
- ◆ Help at county events
- ◆ Use appropriate language

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Basic Parliamentary Procedure for 4-H Clubs



Sometimes meetings are very chaotic when making group decisions. Everyone talks at once, trying to sway others to their point of view. A basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure can make the group decision process more orderly. It is an important skill young people can use throughout life.

Parliamentary procedure can be used by groups as they conduct their meetings. Parliamentary procedure is practiced in Congress, by county commissioners, school boards, and local fair boards, to name a few groups.

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is an organized method for a group to accomplish their goals in an effective, fair and efficient manner. It is:

- **Effective** by providing an orderly way to conduct the group's business and make decisions.
- **Fair** because it is a democratic process for making a decision.
- **Efficient** by keeping the group focused. One item of business is disposed of before going on to another.

Most parliamentary procedure is based on *Robert's Rules of Order*, a book that describes the procedures for conducting items of meeting business.

The Basics

4-H meetings are often the first exposure young people will have to parliamentary procedure. There are volumes of material written

on the fine points of parliamentary procedure, but only the basics are necessary for 90 percent of the business conducted at a local 4-H club meeting. Start with the basics of parliamentary procedure listed here, and then continue to learn by doing.

The Motion

One of the basics of parliamentary procedure is how to move and dispose of a motion. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Recognition by the chair. A member seeks permission to speak to initiate a motion by simply raising his or her hand, or standing, and saying "Mister/Madam President . . ." When the president recognizes the member, that member has the floor and may speak. In a large group, it is a good idea for members to stand when speaking.

2. The motion. A member should say "I move that we buy a 4-H flag." (It is not correct to say, "I make a motion that . . .")

3. Second. The motion must receive a **second** before any discussion begins. A member does not need to be recognized to second a motion but just says, "I second the motion" or simply "Second." Obtaining a second indicates that at least two people favor discussing the motion. If there is no second, the motion is dropped.

4. Discussion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded, its merits can then be discussed. First, the president must recognize a member of the group. The member who is recognized gives reasons –

for or against the motion – to the group. Discussion on a motion may end in three ways: (a) No one says anything, (b) The president decides that there has been adequate discussion or (c) A member says "I call [for] the question" which means that the member wants the motion brought to a vote. In the case of (c), if the motion to call the question is seconded, the president stops the discussion and takes a vote on the "call the question" motion only. If the "call" motion passes by a two-thirds majority, discussion on the original motion is stopped and a vote on it is taken. If the motion to call the question fails to receive a two-thirds majority, discussion on the original motion continues.

5. Vote. Some methods of voting include: voice vote (aye/nay), a show of hands, standing, roll call or secret ballot. The president should always call for both sides of the vote even if the vote appears to be unanimous. The president announces the result of the vote by saying "The motion passes/fails." A majority (more than half of the members who are present and voting) is generally needed to pass a motion, though some motions need a two-thirds vote to pass.

Amendments

At times members of the group will want to change a motion while it is in the discussion phase. This is called an amendment. It is recommended that only one amendment be permitted per motion. An amendment generally strikes out, adds or substitutes words in the main motion. A

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motion has been moved and seconded and is being discussed. To amend a motion:

1. A group member is recognized by the president to speak, then says, "I move to amend the motion to buy a 4-H flag by adding the words '3 foot by 5 foot.'"
2. A second to this amendment is required.
3. **Discussion follows and is only for the amendment**, not the original motion. In the example, members may discuss the merits of a 3 foot by 5 foot 4-H flag, not whether they are to purchase a flag (the original motion).
4. When it is time to vote, the president conducts a vote to determine if the amendment passes. A majority is needed to pass it.
5. **If the amendment passes**, discussion follows on the **motion as amended**. In our example, "I move that we buy a 3 foot by 5 foot 4-H flag."
6. After discussion, a vote is taken on the original motion as amended. A majority is needed for it to pass.
7. **If the amendment does not pass**, discussion on the original motion continues. In our example, this was to "buy a 4-H flag."
8. After the discussion, a vote is taken on the motion. A majority vote is needed for it to pass.

For less formal meetings, such as 4-H club meetings, it may be best to introduce complicated ideas by discussing them before a motion is made. This eliminates the need for most amendments.

To Postpone or Refer to Committee

Sometimes there is a reason to delay a decision on a motion. For example, there may not be enough information for members to make a decision. Two types of motion are used to handle this situation: 1) Refer the motion to a committee and 2) Postpone a motion to a specific date and time. Both types take a majority vote to pass.

The **motion to refer to a committee** allows the motion under discussion to be researched by a smaller group, which then reports its findings to the larger group. The committee may already exist or may be created specifically to handle the issue at hand.

A motion to refer is offered during discussion of the original motion. It requires a second and allows discussion. It also can be amended if a member wants to change some aspect of it, such as adding a deadline for the committee to report back to the group.

A **motion to postpone** can also be offered during discussion of the original motion. This type of motion can be helpful if the group needs more time or information before it can make a good decision. Such a motion should specify when the original motion should come back before the group for more discussion (such as "at the next meeting after our club show").

A motion to postpone requires a second, allows discussion and can also be amended. If a motion to postpone is adopted, the issue at hand is placed under "unfinished

business" on the agenda of the meeting to which it has been postponed.

Adjournment

Adjournment is used to end the meeting.

1. To adjourn the meeting, a member is recognized by the president and says, "I move that we adjourn." A second is required.

2. There is **no discussion permitted**. The group votes on whether to end the meeting. A majority is needed for the motion to pass.

A motion to adjourn can be made at any time during a meeting, but should not be misused by members to adjourn prematurely when there is important business yet to be addressed.

If you're interested in learning more about parliamentary procedure as a decision-making tool, consider the following resources:

- Michigan 4-H Youth Development. (2008). *Helping you help officers and committees*. (Rev. ed.). East Lansing: Author. <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/4h/>
 - National Association of Parliamentarians Web site: <http://www.parliamentarians.org/>
 - Robert, H. M., Evans, W. J., Honemann, D. H., & Balch, T. J. (2000). *Robert's rules of order: Newly revised* (10th ed.). Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- The information in "Basic Parliamentary Procedure for 4-H Clubs" appears in Helping You Help Officers and Committees (4H 1467). It was adapted with permission from the "Ohio State University Fact Sheet 4H-011-99 Parliamentary Procedure," a publication of The Ohio State University Extension.*

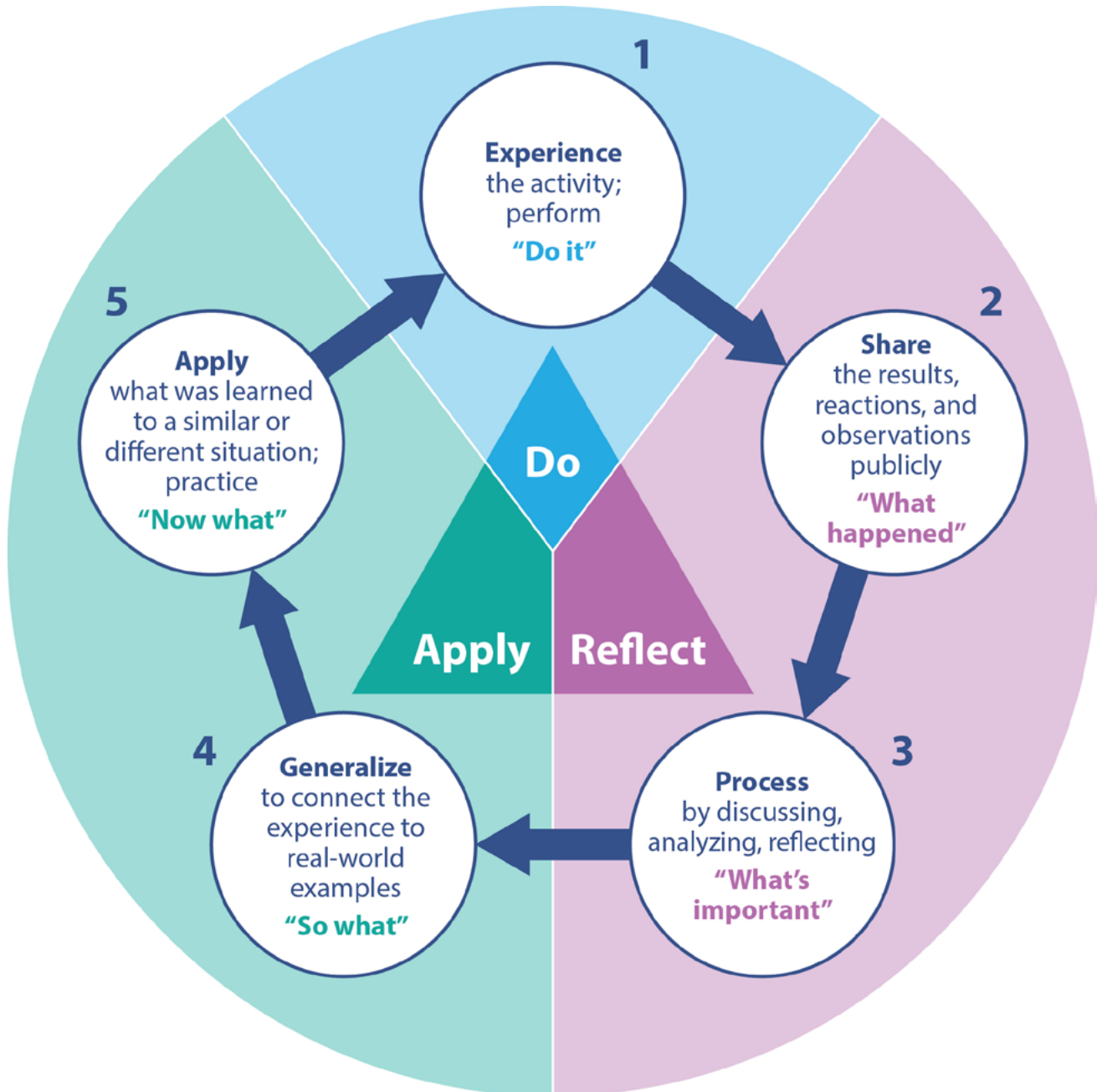
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The Experiential Learning Model



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