



**OUR MISSION:** Women and Youth Supporting Each Other empowers young women by providing the resources and support necessary to make positive life choices and create community change.

# SKILL BUILDING TOOLKIT: SESSION PLANNING & FACILITATION

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## Critical Elements of a WYSE Session

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Several critical elements are fundamental to creating a fun, interactive, and message-based WYSE session. Each session will be unique, since different topics require various approaches, so the session leaders should think critically about how to address each element outlined below. The following structure should be loosely followed and adapted to meet the individual needs and personalities of mentees and your branch. The WYSE curriculum provides many ideas for each session topic based on years of mentor experience.

**Remember:** The WYSE curriculum can be accessed by visiting [www.WYSE.org](http://www.WYSE.org), scrolling to the bottom and clicking “Directors Portal,” and entering the password “**wyse**”.

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**I. Check-in and/or Ice-breaker (approx. 5-10 min.):** Every WYSE session begins with a brief group activity that serves to welcome mentees and mentors to the session, to signal that the session has started, and to focus everyone’s attention on what will be accomplished for the day. The check-in is also the time to assess how everyone is feeling and create group cohesion, which is especially important for sessions when the larger group breaks up into several smaller groups for activities. The check-in should relate to the session topic in order to build on the message of the day.

**II. Clarify session topic, purpose, and message of the day (approx. 2-5 min.):** It is important to clarify the purpose of the session at the beginning so that mentees know what to expect and can get excited about the session. Often, mentors also need a reminder of the message they want to enforce that day. You can clarify the purpose and message by using verbal, visual and physical reiteration. For example, announce the purpose and message, write them on the board, and do an activity that allows mentees to physically get up and relate to the purpose and message. The three different approaches are used because mentees have different learning styles.



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**III. Activities:** The activities are often the most exciting and memorable part of the WYSE experience. These allow mentees to learn through a game, physical activity, or art project, which incorporates opportunities for creativity, self-expression, critical thinking, and/or movement. Every session should have at least one game or activity. (approx. 15-30 min. per activity)

**IV. Discussion:** After each activity, it is critical to have a group discussion. This is the core of the WYSE session. It is the mentors' opportunity to talk about the session topic and connect the activity with the session purpose. Use the *Facilitator Toolbox* to learn how to effectively facilitate a discussion. Ask mentees thoughtful questions that will support them to understand and absorb the lesson, and give mentees an opportunity to express their thoughts and questions. The discussion also allows mentors to gauge if the mentees understood the purpose of the activity. (approx. 15-30 min.)

**VI. Debrief and Evaluate:** In order to evaluate the session, you may want to ask the girls what they learned that day, what they liked best about the session, and what they least enjoyed or would have changed. This helps to improve future sessions and gives mentees a voice in how their WYSE sessions are conducted. (approx. 5 min.)

**VII. Closing (approx. 5 min.):** The closing serves to bring the group together, close the session, and leave the mentees with one last message from the session. It is important to make the closing fun in order to end on a high note and get mentees to look forward to the following week.



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## Tips & Tricks for Planning a WYSE Session:

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- ✓ **Consider how the last session ended.** Do you need to (briefly) follow up on last week's topic? Is there any way to connect last week's topic to this week's topic?
- ✓ **Include time in session for mentees to be with their mentors one-on-one.** This can be done during the discussion, warm-up, activities, or closing.
- ✓ **Be aware of current events, articles, movies, songs, books, etc. that relate to your topic.** Use these during session or at the reflection meeting.
- ✓ **Keep sessions interactive and avoid lecturing.** Make information-sharing interactive and multi-dimensional. Ask questions before you give answers.
- ✓ **Mentors should always participate WITH mentees.** If they are creating collages, jump in and create one too. Mentors should model proper session behavior and conduct.
- ✓ **Keep the mentees involved.** Make sure that mentees have opportunities to express themselves. Allow them to facilitate whenever possible.
- ✓ **Use the WYSE Curriculum.** Pick out relevant games or activities or create your own. The curriculum is long, so be selective. Make sure that there is at least one game/activity in each session. The WYSE curriculum can be accessed by visiting [www.WYSE.org](http://www.WYSE.org), scrolling to the bottom and clicking "Directors Portal," and entering the password "**wyse**".

### REMEMBER:

- x WYSE is NOT a classroom lecturing experience.
- x WYSE is NOT a forum for dictating what young women SHOULD and SHOULDN'T do.
- x WYSE is NOT a theoretical discussion – it is an interactive and proactive curriculum.



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## Mock Session Planning

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Overview: Work in small groups to plan a mock WYSE session using the national curriculum and the Session Outline below. If time allows, it may also be helpful to simulate an actual session and give mentors a chance to flex their facilitator muscles before they begin working with mentees.

### Session name

Date

Facilitators

### Ice Breaker (# minutes total)

- *Describe icebreaker*
- *Debrief: (list some of the questions you might ask)*

**Purpose (2 minute):** What is the purpose of the session?

**Message (2 minute):** What is the take away message of your session?

### Activity 1 (# minutes total)

- *Activity (# minutes total)*
- *Debrief (5 minutes):*
- *Materials needed?*

### Activity 2 (# minutes total)

- *Activity*
- *Debrief*
- *Materials needed?*

### Journal writing (# minutes)

- *Prompt:*

### Community action discussion (# minutes)

### Session debrief (# minutes total)

- List some of the questions you want to discuss in a large group

### Closing activity (# minutes)



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## SAMPLE SESSION: Social Media

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### I. Ice breaker

- i) What social media apps do you have? Which one is your favorite? How often do you check it?
- ii) Debrief: what is social media?  
(1) DEFINITION: SOCIAL MEDIA- websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

**Purpose:** Develop media literacy, learn how to evaluate media messages, be more aware online

**Message:** A lot of things we see on Instagram are not depictions of real life, and we shouldn't treat it as so. We also have to be careful about what we put online, because some things are kept forever and can't be deleted, and also have to look out for our own safety.

### II. Picture Framing

- i) Media can be manipulative – Photos
- ii) Unrepresentative

### III. Security and Privacy

- i) True or false

### Activities

- I. Picture Activity (show pictures of photoshopped pictures)
  - a. Discuss framing, media distortions, how media can be manipulative
  - b. Why?:
    - i. It is critical to evaluate these media messages, understand how they tie to self esteem, and also understand that things aren't always the way they seem, especially when they seem too good to be true
  - c. The danger of Snapchat geofilters
- II. Question activity (True or False)
  - a. When you create passwords, you should make them easy to guess. (false)
  - b. If you delete something off of social media, it's gone forever (false)
  - c. What do you think the most viewed video on youtube is?? (PSY – Gangnam Style (+2.7 billion views))
- III. Step into the circle
  - a. If Instagram is your favorite social media
  - b. if you've ever said anything mean online or used bad language
  - c. If you have your full name somewhere online
  - d. If going on social media has made you feel bad about yourself

### Session debrief

- Thoughts? Questions? Are you going to change anything about your social media now?  
Restate purpose/message.



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## Sample: Session Plan Worksheet for Mentors

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Session Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Message/Purpose:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ice-breaker Activity (5-10 minutes):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 1 and Discussion Questions (30-45 minutes):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2 and Discussion Questions (30-45 minutes):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Community Action Discussion/Wrap-Up (10-20 minutes):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session Debrief & Closing Activity (10-20 minutes):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Supplies Needed:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Be prepared to present this completed worksheet to the Director Team two weeks prior to your session date.**