

## ACTIVITY 13

# Dear Advisory

**Purpose:** Celebrate the unique qualities that each advisee brings to the group and learn about each other's areas of expertise.

**APPROXIMATE TIME:**

30 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

Lined paper or journals

**ADVISOR NOTES:**

## 1. Modify "Dear Advisory" to Give Advice Later in the Year

"Dear Advisory" can also be done as a way of asking for and receiving advice within the advisory group throughout the year. Have your advisees write problems or challenges that they are facing on individual index cards. Then collect the cards, read them out loud one by one, and have the group discuss possible solutions or next steps for each.

## 2. Encourage Creativity by Providing Choice

At the end of this activity, your advisees will be writing a letter to the group in which they share an area of personal expertise. There are many ways that they might want to convey this information: a poem, rap, dialogue, series of cartoon panels, drawing, song, advertisement, reality show application, newspaper article, mural, series of tweets . . . the list goes on. Choice empowers adolescents and leads to buy-in. Take some time to brainstorm ways advisees might craft their letters, and provide these kinds of choices in future activities.

## 3. Pacing This Activity

If your advisees don't have time to share their "Dear Advisory" letters in their groups, you can collect them or have them store their letters in their folders. In upcoming meetings, you can read one or more letters in your opening or closing routine, or build in time for the groups to reconvene and hear each other's stories.

**PROCEDURE:**

## 1. Explain and Model the "Dear Advisory" Activity

- Explain to advisees that they will be learning new things about the members of the advisory group today. They will start by brainstorming a list of ten things they are "experts" in.
- Start by modeling your list as a way to illustrate the notion of expert as vast and varied.

- Then pass out lined paper or have advisees use their journals to brainstorm a list of ten things they have expertise in. Tell them to skip three or four lines between each item on their list.

## **2. Share Expert Lists in Groups**

- Divide advisees into groups of four and have them sit in a small circle or square.
- Then have them pass their lists to the person on their left. They should read through the list and respond to it by writing a star by the topics they find most interesting, ask questions in the space underneath the items on the list, annotate or comment on topics that they are also experts in, etc.
- Continue to rotate each list within your advisory group until everyone has read and commented on every list and the lists have arrived back with the creators.
- Instruct advisees to look over the notes from their peers and choose one of the ten topics to expand on in a letter to their advisory group that starts with "Dear Advisory" and tells the story of how and why they are an expert in this particular area. Encourage creativity by inviting advisees to write their letter in a different genre (see Advisor Notes).

## **3. Share "Dear Advisory" Letters**

- Once advisees have finished their letters, you can have everyone pass the letters around again and respond in the margins or have advisees read or share their letters (or whatever they created) with the group.
- If time is limited, you can have a couple of advisees share their letters and then collect the rest. In upcoming advisory meetings, have two or three advisees read their letters at the start of the meeting until everyone's letter has been read.