

# Making the Best 4-H Clubs Better – Virtually

---

## Curriculum Overview

### INTRODUCTION

This collection of lessons is meant to aid 4-H Club volunteers in providing an educational component to their 4-H club meetings, even in a virtual format. There have been two sets of lessons in the “Making the Best 4-H Clubs Better” curriculum that were designed for 4-H volunteers to conduct during their in-person club meetings. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 forced clubs to move to virtual meetings and challenged volunteers to include the educational component of their club meetings.

### BACKGROUND FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

One of the best ways to develop resiliency during times of adversity is the presence of a caring, supportive adult (Arnold & Rennekamp, 2020). Your club members are looking to you as their 4-H leader/ advisor/volunteer to provide an opportunity to engage in out-of-school time learning and socialization through their 4-H club. The structure of a youth’s life around school, sports, clubs, social activities and family functions have been disrupted, so your 4-H club meetings might just be the one opportunity youth have to develop or continue a positive relationship with a caring, supportive adult (Arnold & Rennekamp, 2020). Being prepared for hosting a virtual club meeting is the best way to increase the likelihood it will be a success. Youth indicate adult leaders who are unknowledgeable or ill-prepared for activities lead to a negative youth development experience (Dworkin & Larson, 2007). However, it does not mean you have to be a virtual platform expert but being prepared ahead of implementation by using the information contained in this overview can assist you in avoiding a negative club meeting experience. Research clearly demonstrates sustained, supportive relationships between youth and adults are valuable in buffering long-term effects of adversity faced by youth (Harris, 2018). Virtual communication might not be your preference; but youth need your support and encouragement now more than ever, so it is time for 4-H Volunteers to jump into action. Developing capable, competent adults through positive youth development is the reason you signed up to be a 4-H volunteer!

### HOW TO USE LESSONS

Most of the lessons were developed previously to conduct during in-person club meetings. To help navigate the lesson, each lesson includes a side bar that indicates the objectives of the lesson, equipment and supplies needed, tasks to complete before lesson implementation and additional resources (if applicable). The Virtual Version of the curriculum includes revised lessons to conduct in a virtual club setting utilizing a virtual communication platform. To get you started, a few of those virtual platforms are explained below but the chart is by no means a complete, comprehensive list of virtual video platforms available to 4-H volunteers. Each lesson can be used as a stand-alone activity or can be combined with another lesson to provide an educational portion to your 4-H club meeting. Lessons are written to take approximately 20 minutes to complete so utilize them to fill the time allotted in your club meeting agenda.

The lessons have been developed using the Experiential Learning Model:

- ✓ Facilitator of the lesson introduces information on a practice or idea “Information” and guides the youth through the learning experience
- ✓ The learning experience “What to Do” typically includes an interactive or hands-on activity where participants are thinking and/or doing
- ✓ The reflection section “Talk It Over” provides reflect and apply questions that the facilitator uses to allow participants to make sense of what they learned. This allows them to understand the purpose of the activity and apply it to life situations beyond the current activity.

	<b>Facebook Group Video Chat</b>	<b>Google Meet</b>	<b>Skype</b>	<b>Webex</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<b>Access</b>	Phone or computer	Phone or computer	Phone or computer	Phone or Computer	Phone or computer
<b>Chat</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Cost</b>	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Mute Participants</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Limitations</b>	Must have a Facebook account to belong to group Limited to 50 participants	Must have a Gmail account to set up meeting 60-minute time limit Limited to 100 participants No dial-in option	Those will slow bandwidth might have lower call quality Limited to 100 participants	50-minute time limit Limited to 100 participants No dial-in option	40-minute time limit Limited to 100 participants
<p><i>Check with your Extension Office/ Extension Professional because they may have access to a virtual platform without the limitations listed here.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This information was current as of 1/1/2021</li> </ul>					

### **FACILITATOR TIPS AND TRICKS**

- Familiarize yourself with the virtual platform
- Practice with another volunteer or Extension Professional before the meeting
- Recruit 1-2 volunteers, parents, or teen members to be your tech support and chat box monitor during the meeting. (It is hard to coordinate the meeting flow and keep up with all the other functions of the virtual platform.)
- Remind parents and youth to log on to the meeting a few minutes early so that you can troubleshoot any issues getting connected.

### **SOURCES**

Arnold, M. E., & Rennekamp, R. A. (2020). A time like no other: 4-H youth development and COVID-19. *Journal of Extension*, 58(3), Article v58-3comm1. <https://joe.org/joe/2020june/comm1.php>

Dworkin, J., & Larson, R. (2007). Adolescents' negative experiences in organized youth activities. *Journal of Youth Development*, 1(3), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2007.373>

Harris, N. B. (2018) *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. New York, NY: Mariner Books.

**Prepared by:** Travis West, Extension Educator, Vinton County

**Curriculum Team Members:** Sally Bluck, Josi Brodt-Evans, Kathy Bruynis, Christy Clary, Danielle Combs, Erin Dailey, Rachael Fraley, Michelle Stumbo, Nancy Sydenstricker, Kristy Watters, Kate Wells, Travis West, Jo Williams, Tracy Winters.