



## Troubleshooting 4-H Club Problems

<b>Problem: Lack of Participation – Members do not participate in group activities.</b>	
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may not be interested in the activity or program. They may not understand the goals or the goals are inappropriate for members' age, needs or interests.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve members in setting goals and in planning the program and activities.</li> <li>• Keep lines of communication open</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may feel insecure.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let younger, inexperienced members serve on a committee where they can gain experience before giving a big assignment.</li> <li>• Give each member responsibility for at least one important task.</li> <li>• Promote a friendly, helpful group spirit – no one laughs or ridicules a person who “goofs.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More aggressive members may not give others a chance to participate.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a group goal that “everyone participates.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may not know how to participate.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach members how to perform the role or assignment if they don't know how.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meeting schedule may be in conflict with other activities/commitments.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change meeting time to meet needs of group.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may be forgetful.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute club calendars to all members.</li> <li>• Use reminder phone calls (can be assigned to a member or parent).</li> </ul>

<b>Problem: Declining Membership – Members are dropping out; the group does not attract new members.</b>	
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Present members may be cliquish and fail to welcome prospective or new members.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to improve atmosphere – make it warmer, more friendly.</li> <li>• Help cliquish members to recognize the result of their behavior and to work at making all members feel liked and wanted.</li> <li>• Give newer members responsibilities so they will have a role in the organization and feel important to the group.</li> <li>• Recognize members for what they do.</li> <li>• Make a list of prospective members and extend friendly, personal invitations.</li> <li>• Invite prospects to go to a meeting with you.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The program may not be of interest to current or prospective members or they may not know enough about it.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure present and prospective members understand the purposes of the group.</li> <li>• Publicize the program and activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some members or prospective members may not have a way to get to meetings.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange car pools.</li> </ul>

<b>Problem: Lack of Interest in the Educational Program – Members attend only the social functions.</b>	
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members do not identify their personal goals with those of the program.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve members in setting group goals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may not have had a large enough role in planning the program</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in close partnership with members to plan the programs they want.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may not find a satisfying role in carrying out the programs.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all members have challenging responsibilities that they can carry out successfully.</li> <li>• Recognize members for their contributions.</li> </ul>

<b>Problem: Disorderly Meetings – Meetings are disorganized or plagued by interruptions when members come late or change the topic of discussion.</b>	
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The group has fallen into bad habits.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss problems openly with members, but without placing blame. What standards do they want?</li> <li>• See the problems described above; any of these could cause disorderly meetings.</li> <li>• Review responsibilities of club officers and reinforce procedures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members are coming late.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the meeting time.</li> <li>• Open with the most attractive parts of the program.</li> <li>• Run recreational activities as members arrive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members may not know what is expected.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage members to state their expectations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meetings are not appropriately structured or are not well planned.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to “Tips for Conducting Club Meetings”.</li> </ul>

<b>Problem: Poor Group Relationships – There is bickering and jealousy among members; members want to run the show and feel that the adults dominate.</b>	
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individuals may not understand their own motivation or that of others.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss basic motivations – why people act as they do.</li> <li>• Work to develop mutual understanding and trust among members and between members and leaders; when a statement or behavior is inappropriate, ask, don’t assume you know the reason behind it.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individuals cannot distinguish between differences in ideas and differences in personalities</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept members as they are; don’t make your approval and acceptance dependent upon their behavior.</li> <li>• Help members to focus on what is being said, rather than who is saying it.</li> <li>• Focus on contribution and appreciation. “Your contribution counts.” “We appreciate what</li> </ul>

	you have done.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individuals may feel insecure and therefore are excessively shy or aggressive.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build self-confidence and feelings of worth by focusing on each member’s assets and strengths. “I like the way you handled that.” “I appreciate what you did.”</li> <li>• Let the members know their worth. Recognize improvement and effort, not just accomplishment.</li> <li>• Encourage cooperation rather than competition.</li> <li>• Focus on the member’s ability to manage his or her life and make decisions. Do not anticipate failure. “I trust you to become responsible and independent.”</li> </ul>

**Problem: Lack of Parental Support - Parents don’t attend meetings, parents don’t encourage their children, and/or parents don’t accept their own responsibilities.**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parents don’t know what 4-H is all about and/or don’t get timely information about club activities.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a club newsletter.</li> <li>• Hold parents meetings.</li> <li>• Involve the entire family in the program planning process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parents don’t have a role in the club meeting; they have not been asked to participate or have been left out of everything except the chores.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use “Parents Can Help In Our 4-H Program” to find ways to involve parents.</li> <li>• Use “4-H Parent Participation Survey” to discover what parents are willing to contribute and then ask them.</li> <li>• Create parent committees that meet at the same time the club meets.</li> <li>• Create job descriptions and ask directly for specific leadership roles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parents don’t understand the developmental needs of their children.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with parents about how specific 4-H projects and activities contribute to their children’s development.</li> <li>• Inform parents about ways they can contribute to their child’s success.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parents have not been recognized or given credit for the work they’ve done.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank parents when you see them; call them when they’ve done a bit extra.</li> <li>• Hold a parent’s appreciation and recognition night.</li> </ul>

Reference: *Material adapted from Minnesota 4-H Club Management Guide and used with permission of University of Minnesota Extension Center for 4-H and Community Youth Development and Iowa State University Extension.*

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