
ACTIVITY: “SO THAT” CHAINS IN SMALL GROUPS

Summary: This group activity is designed to involve a program team in the articulation of a program’s theory of change. It is best for groups of 2 or more, and is suitable for use with staff, youth, or other stakeholders who are familiar with the day-to-day work of a program.

Materials: Paper (ideally 12 X 17 or larger), sticky notes in at least two different colors, and markers; Alternatively, this activity can be replicated virtually using a platform like [Google Jamboard](#) or [Miro](#).

Step-By-Step:

1. Have participants assemble in groups of 2-4 and hand out one piece of paper and sticky notes in two different colors to each pair or group.
2. Have the groups spend a few minutes deciding on the ultimate goal of their organization or program. This should be fairly broad and could even be the program’s vision statement. Have the groups write the goal down on the bottom of their large sheet of paper. If there are multiple stated goals of a program, you could assign one big goal per group.
3. Using one color of sticky notes, give groups 5-10 minutes to brainstorm the strategies that their program or organization implements. An example of a strategy could be “one-on-one mentoring” or “college visits” or similar.
4. Have groups lay out their strategy sticky notes on the table and take a couple of minutes to group them and remove or combine duplicates.
5. Using a series of “so that,” statements, have groups connect their activities to the big goal statement on their paper. Write the intermediate steps on the other color of sticky notes. These could be outputs or outcomes. Have groups lay out “so that” chains connecting each activity to the big goal. Use arrows to connect the chain (each arrow is a “so that”). Take 10-15 minutes.
6. Debrief the activity. *What did you notice? Was it difficult to make these connections? Why or why not?*

To wrap up the activity, try to summarize the program theory that the groups have articulated. If there are activities that do not connect to the mission or goal, consider whether that activity is necessary, and why.