

# TRUSTED ADULTS

## CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW: TRUSTED ADULTS

One of the most effective ways to protect young people from suicide is to ensure they have strong and supportive connections with caring adults in their lives. This support is especially crucial during times when schools may be closed or access to services is limited.

A Trusted Adult can be anyone a young person feels safe turning to; this might be a parent, older sibling, relative, teacher, coach, employer, faith leader, or community member. Research shows that students trained as Sources of Strength Peer Leaders are four times more likely to refer a suicidal friend to a Trusted Adult, making these connections a powerful tool in youth suicide prevention. The goal of the Trusted Adult Campaign is to help students identify and build relationships with Trusted Adults they can turn to during difficult times or when a friend needs support.



### Campaign Goals

- Increase Student/Trusted Adult connectedness
- Practice help-seeking pathways before there is a crisis
- Use positive social norming to encourage healthy relationships and connections between Students and Trusted Adults
- Foster a culture where students believe that Trusted Adults are a safe, reliable source of support—for themselves and for friends who may be struggling or at risk of suicide

### Downloadable Attachments:

- [Thank you Cards](#)
- [Campaign Reflection](#)

### Campaign Structure

After completing your initial training, it's time to launch your first campaign. This document is designed to help guide your planning, from brainstorming to scheduling activities. Feel free to adapt everything to best fit your site's culture and community needs.

**First Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 When was your first Peer Leader meeting? \_\_\_\_\_  
 When will your recurring meetings be? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How will you inform Peer Leaders? \_\_\_\_\_

**Campaign Launch Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 When will you begin to roll out your Trusted Adult Campaign? \_\_\_\_\_



### Campaign Cycle

Each campaign cycle involves planning, a launch, campaign activities, and then celebration and evaluation. A campaign can roll out over 6-8 weeks. We recommend meeting with your Peer Leader team every other week for about an hour. We developed four Peer Leader meeting agendas to support a Trusted Adult Campaign. By the end of the campaign cycle, let's work toward giving every young person in your community an opportunity to interact with the campaign and apply the Strengths to their own lives.

- First Meeting:** Defining What A Trusted Adult Is
- Second Meeting:** Naming Ways That Trusted Adults Support Us?
- Third Meeting:** Identify The Trusted Adults In Our School/Community
- Fourth Meeting:** Sharing And Celebration Of Our Trusted Adults

# COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH MODALITIES



## PRESENTATIONS

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- Peer Leaders attend classes and meetings to crowdsource a definition of Trusted Adults.
- Have students write thank-you cards to their Trusted Adult.
- Write a job description or recipe for a Trusted Adult.
- Collect Trusted Adult story submissions (a collection of essays, audio interviews to make a podcast, video interviews to make a movie, etc).



## CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

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- **English/Language Arts:** Lead a discussion based on a story (book or film) involving Trusted Adults. What aspects of Trusted Adults were important to the story, and what was their impact?
- **History:** Who is a leader of a movement you admire, and why? Who were their Trusted Adults?
- **Film/Theater:** Watch a movie or documentary featuring individual(s) leaning on or becoming Trusted Adults.



## ART, MURAL, AND WALL DISPLAYS

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- Write chalk messages of gratitude in staff parking spaces or community sidewalks.
- Create an “I am a Trusted Adult” mural on a wall where Trusted Adults can pose.
- Design an “I have been nominated as a Trusted Adult at [Your site name]” badge award/graphic/decal.
- Create a wall display of the names of Trusted Adults where students can interact with and write positive messages to their Trusted Adults.



## ALL SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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- Create a March Madness-style competition. (Peer Leader vs. Adult basketball game)
- Host a series of TED talks delivered by Trusted Adults on a topic of their choice.
- Create a questionnaire to learn more about Trusted Adults and use the answers to develop:
  - Trusted Adult games.
  - Trusted Adult Mad Libs
  - Trusted Adult Bingo
  - Trusted Adult Game Show (like Jeopardy or Family Feud)
  - Trusted Adult Scavenger Hunt (Can you guess who? 2-3 clues per day, first three to guess get a prize or get to nominate the next Trusted Adult)



## AUDIO, VIDEO, MUSIC, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Host “Trusted Adult Tuesdays” where morning announcements feature a student sharing a story about their Trusted Adult.
- Collect song submissions from staff and Trusted Adults to feature during meetings or Announcements.
- Develop a storytelling video series that is focused on Trusted Adults.
- Trusted Adult Mixtape: create a playlist using songs about Trusted Adults. (BONUS! The songs from the playlist can also be used to replace the class bell during Wheel Wednesday!)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

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- Dress up like your Trusted Adult and tag them on your social media accounts, and challenge five friends to do the same.
- Sixty Second Stories. Use your Instagram story to share about your Trusted Adult in less than 60 seconds, and tag five friends to do the same.
- Each week, highlight a different Trusted Adult on Social Media and use hashtags like #TrustedAdults, #WholsYourTrustedAdult, #MyTrustedAdult, or reflect with your team or town to get Trusted Adults trending at your site.

These are campaign ideas to help fuel your brainstorming, but make sure every activity you do includes ideas and elements from your Peer Leaders. As a group, visit [sourceofstrength.org](https://sourceofstrength.org) and Sources of Strength social media platforms (specifically Instagram @sourceofstrength) for more ideas.

**Goals**

- Introduce the Trusted Adults Campaign
- Have Peer Leaders reflect on and define the Trusted Adults in their lives

**Materials Needed**

- A ball of yarn or string
- Pens, markers or pencils
- Chart paper, white board space or sticky notes

**WELCOME** (1-2 min)

Thank all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for joining the meeting. Reaffirm to Peer Leaders that their voices have power—they are Agents of Change and Connectors to Help in their schools and communities. The Trusted Adult Campaign is all about helping young people identify someone in their life they can turn to during tough times—a Trusted Adult. One of the strongest protective factors for young people is having caring and supportive adults they can trust. In this campaign, they'll take time to reflect on who their Trusted Adults are, why those relationships matter, and how they can help others in the school community connect with theirs.

**ONE PART FUN: WEB OF TRUST** (5-10 min)

The games listed under the 'Fun' section of the campaign are suggested activities. Feel free to substitute them with other Sources games featured on page 151 of the [Field Guide](#), based on what best suits your group's comfort level and preferences.

**Objective:** To help students identify Trusted Adults in their lives and understand the importance of building supportive connections.

**How to Play:**

1. **Circle Up:** Have the group sit or stand in a circle.
2. **Pass the Yarn:** The facilitator starts by holding the end of the yarn and saying: "One Trusted Adult I can talk to is [name or role], and they support me by [brief example]."
3. **Toss It:** After sharing, they hold onto part of the yarn and toss the ball to another person across the circle.
4. **Keep It Going:** Each person who catches the yarn shares their Trusted Adult and how that person helps them, then tosses it to someone else. As the game continues, a 'Web of Trust' forms.
5. **Debrief:** Ask the group to look at the web they've created. Talk about how we're all connected and supported by different adults, and how that strengthens us.

**Adaptations:**

- Use a beach ball with questions written on it (e.g., "Who's one adult who has supported you?" "What qualities make someone trustworthy?")
- For virtual settings, use a digital whiteboard where students can write the name of a Trusted Adult and one reason why they trust them.

**ONE PART SHARING** (5-10 min)

"Before we define what a Trusted Adult is, let's think about our own lives. Most of us have had someone we could count on—someone who showed up, listened, or helped when we needed it."

Divide Peer Leaders into small groups of 3 to 4 and invite them to reflect on one or all of the questions below:

1. Think of a time when an adult showed up for you or for someone you know. What did they do that made them feel trustworthy or safe?”
2. “How did that person make a difference for you, either in a small moment or a big way?”

Encourage them to focus on actions and qualities rather than just roles or titles.

Feel free to model this with a personal example. If time allows, invite a few groups to share their reflections with the whole room.

## **ONE PART PLANNING: DEFINING A TRUSTED ADULT** (15-20 min)

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“Before we can help our school identify and celebrate Trusted Adults, we need to first understand what that means to us. Everyone has different experiences and perspectives, so let’s define what a Trusted Adult is together.”

Have Peer Leaders stay in the same groups from above, or feel free to switch groups around. Give each small group a large sheet of chart paper, whiteboard space, sticky notes, or a blank Google document, and ask them to discuss and write down:

### **1. What is a Trusted Adult?**

- What qualities or characteristics make someone feel trustworthy?
- What does a Trusted Adult do (or not do)?

### **2. Why do Trusted Adults matter?**

- How can Trusted Adults help young people during tough times, but also day-to-day?
- Why should everyone have a Trusted Adult?

### **3. Examples of Trusted Adults**

- Encourage groups to list people they know of (no names required!) who are good examples of Trusted Adults. (ex. coach, aunt, teacher, neighbor, mentor, etc.)

After about 10 minutes of discussion and group writing, invite each group to share 1–2 highlights or key takeaways from their list. Capture big themes on a shared poster or digital document to bring back next time.

“This shared definition will help guide how we talk about this campaign and how we explain it to others. You all just helped create the foundation of what this campaign is really about.”

## **CLOSING** (1-2 min)

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Thank all the Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for participating in the meeting. Challenge Peer Leaders to take a moment to think of one adult in their life who has made them feel safe or supported. Next time they see them, encourage them to say thank you or tell them what they mean to them. Next meeting, you will begin turning today’s ideas into real stories by planning out how you all highlight examples of Trusted Adults in your school community.

Don’t forget to share the time and date for the next meeting before everyone leaves.

**Goals**

- Have Peer Leaders reflect on how the Trusted Adults in their lives have supported them
- Decide how to collect stories of Trusted Adults from the school/community.
- Identifying roles and responsibilities for campaign launch

**Materials Needed**

- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Chart paper, whiteboard space or Sticky Notes

**WELCOME** (1-2 min)

Thank all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for joining the meeting. Last meeting, Peer Leaders discussed what makes a Trusted Adult and why they matter. Today, they will reflect and imagine what their school could feel like if every student had a Trusted Adult in their life. Together they will also take time to reflect on who their Trusted Adults are and how they've supported them. Peer Leaders will also begin planning how to bring those ideas to life through stories from their school and community.

**ONE PART FUN: WHO'S IN YOUR CORNER** (5-10 min)

The games listed under the 'Fun' section of the campaign are suggested activities. Feel free to substitute them with other Sources games featured on page 151 of the [Field Guide](#), based on what best suits your group's comfort level and preferences.

**Objective:** This activity is a creative twist on the traditional Four Corners game. This version is intended to help students reflect on the Trusted Adults in their lives and begin imagining how to build a school culture where every student feels that same support.

**How to Play:**

1. Label the four corners of the room with the following categories:
  - **Listens Without Judgment**
  - **Shows Up Consistently**
  - **Gives Good Advice**
  - **Helps Me Feel Like I Belong**
2. Read aloud a prompt or scenario (see examples below).
3. Ask students to walk to the corner that most represents how they would know someone is a Trusted Adult in that situation.
4. Once everyone has chosen a corner, invite a few volunteers from each group to share why they picked that one.
5. Continue with a few different scenarios, allowing students to move around and hear different perspectives.

**Example Prompts:**

- You're having a rough week, but don't want to talk about it yet. What would a Trusted Adult do that helps you feel safe enough to open up?
- You made a mistake and you're nervous to tell someone. What quality would help you trust an adult with that information?
- You're celebrating something big, like passing a test, performing on stage, or making a team. What kind of support would feel meaningful from a Trusted Adult?
- You don't know who to talk to about something personal. What makes an adult stand out as someone you could go to?

**Adaptations:** Feel free to customize the four corners to reflect what's most relevant or meaningful to your students and school community.

## **ONE PART SHARING** (5-10 min)

"Before we dive into planning our video interviews, let's take a moment to reflect. We've all had different experiences when it comes to asking for help or knowing who we can count on. Trusted Adults can make a big difference, but not everyone always feels comfortable reaching out. Let's talk about what things could look like if everyone had someone they could turn to, and what might get in the way of that."

Divide Peer Leaders into pairs and invite them to reflect on one or all of the questions below:

1. What would our school look like if every student had at least one Trusted Adult?
2. What do you think gets in the way of young people asking adults for help?

Feel free to model this with a personal example. If time allows, invite a few groups to share their reflections with the whole room.

## **ONE PART PLANNING: CAMPAIGN PREP AND ROLE ASSIGNMENT** (15-20 min)

"We're preparing to interview students about their Trusted Adults and create a video that will be shared across our school community. Today, we'll plan exactly how to make this happen. We will decide together who will do what, how we'll organize the interviews, and what kinds of questions we'll ask."

### **1. Brainstorm Interview Questions: (Optional step)**

Have the group brainstorm and suggest questions. Write these on a board or chart paper, then vote on the top questions to finalize. Feel free to use the curated list of questions below to save time.

Example questions might include:

- Who is a Trusted Adult in your life, and how did you get to know them?
- What is one way this person has helped you during a tough time?
- Why do you think having a trusted adult is important for students?
- How do you feel when you talk to your Trusted Adult?
- What advice would you give to someone who doesn't have a Trusted Adult yet?

### **2. Introduce Key Roles:**

Explain and discuss the variety of roles that need to be filled. Here are some roles to consider:

- **Interviewers:** People who will conduct the interviews and engage students in sharing their stories.
- **Video Editors:** Those who will help piece together the video clips into a final video.
- **Scheduling Coordinators:** Team members who will arrange interview times and coordinate with students and Trusted Adults.
- **Equipment Managers:** People who handle cameras, microphones, and any tech needed during filming.
- **Storytellers/On-Camera Participants:** Students who will share their own stories on camera.

### **3. Assign Roles:**

Ask Peer Leaders to volunteer or be nominated for the roles above. Make sure each role has clear responsibilities. Make sure you have a process for remembering who has signed up for what and when! Encourage Peer Leaders to take a picture of the signup or use a messaging or app service to send out reminders during the campaign.

## **CLOSING** (1-2 min)

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Thank all the Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for participating in the meeting. Encourage Peer Leaders to start thinking about 1 to 2 people they might want to interview, and why their story might help someone else. At your next meeting, Peer Leaders will work with their teams to prepare for filming and make sure everyone feels confident and supported.

**Don't forget to share the time and date for the next meeting before everyone leaves.**

**Goals**

- Peer Leaders will work together as a team to capture stories that highlight the impact of Trusted Adults in their school
- Peer Leaders will work within their teams to finalize their next steps of the campaign

**Materials Needed**

- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Trusted Adult example prompts

**WELCOME** (1-2 min)

Thank all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for joining the meeting. In the last meeting, Peer Leaders discussed who their Trusted Adults are and how those adults support them. They started a plan to capture stories of Trusted Adults through student interviews, complete with roles and responsibilities. They brainstormed questions, picked teams, and set this campaign in motion. Today, they will focus on getting organized, making final decisions, and preparing to bring these stories of Trusted Adults in our school community to life on camera.

**ONE PART FUN: WHEELHOUSE CONNECTION (TRUSTED ADULT EDITION)** (5-10 min)

The games listed under the 'Fun' section of the campaign are suggested activities. Feel free to substitute them with other Sources games featured on page 151 of the [Field Guide](#), based on what best suits your group's comfort level and preferences.

**Objective:** Create meaningful, playful connections between students (and optionally, adults) by encouraging short conversations that highlight the importance and presence of Trusted Adults in their lives.

**How to Play:**

1. Form two circles: an inner circle and an outer circle. Each person in the inner circle should be facing someone in the outer circle. These are the initial pairs.
2. The facilitator reads a Trusted Adult-themed prompt out loud. (examples below)  
Partners have about 1-2 minutes to share their responses with each other.
3. Rotate Partners: When time is up, the facilitator says "rotate" (or plays music). The outer circle moves to the right (or left) until the facilitator says stop (or music stops). Everyone now has a new partner!
4. Repeat for 4-6 rounds (or as time allows). Each time a new prompt is read.

**Trusted Adult Prompts** (Examples)

1. Who's a Trusted Adult in your life, and how did you come to trust them?
2. What's something a Trusted Adult has done for you that made a big impact?
3. If you could give your Trusted Adult a superpower, what would it be and why?
4. What's one small thing a Trusted Adult does that always makes you feel seen or supported?
5. What qualities do you value most in a Trusted Adult?
6. Can you think of a time a Trusted Adult helped you through something hard?
7. What advice would you give to someone looking for a Trusted Adult they can talk to?

**Adaptations:**

- Feel free to add to or adjust the prompts so they make the most sense for your school or community.
- If you have enough adults in the room, consider making the outer circle all adults and the inner circle all students to encourage meaningful student-adult connections.

## **ONE PART SHARING** (5-10 min)

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“Before we jump into our planning time, let’s pause to reflect on why this campaign matters. Trusted Adults can be helpful in many ways, but they also can often be the people who make it safe for us to fully be ourselves.”

Divide Peer Leaders into small groups of 3 to 4 and invite them to reflect on one or all of the questions below:

1. Who is an adult you can be yourself around, and why do they make you feel that way?

Feel free to model this with a personal example. If time allows, invite a few groups to share their reflections with the whole room.

## **ONE PART PLANNING: CAMPAIGN PLANNING TIME** (15-20 min)

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“We’re officially launching into our campaign work today! Each team will meet to make a game plan, organize your next steps, and make sure we’re all ready to move forward.”

Break Peer Leaders into their chosen working groups and give them time to plan. Some options to consider:

### **Interviewers**

- Think of 3 to 5 students they want to ask to be interviewed?
- How will they explain what the campaign is and why their story matters?
- What do they need to feel confident leading the interviews?

### **Scheduling Coordinators**

- When will interviews take place? (Before school, during lunch, advisory, etc.)
- How will they make sure everyone has a time and place to film?
- Who needs to be looped in (teachers, counselors, etc.)?

### **Equipment Managers**

- What equipment do we need? (Phone/camera, tripod, mic, charger, etc.)
- Test that the equipment works

### **Video Editors**

- What is your vision for the final video?
- Will there be music, titles, and student voiceovers?
- What’s your timeline for editing?

Once small groups have met, if time allows, bring everyone back together for a quick team share-out:

- What’s their first step?
- What help do they need from the rest of the team?

Before the meeting ends, Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors should have decided on a time when interviews and videos will take place.

## **CLOSING** (1-2 min)

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Thank all the Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for participating in the meeting. This week, encourage Peer Leaders to take a moment to check in with their Trusted Adult. Have them think about a way they can let their Trusted Adult know they appreciate them, or simply spend time together. Let Peer Leaders know that at their next meeting, they will be focused on finalizing how they want to share the video(s) with the rest of the school.

Don’t forget to share the time and date for the next meeting before everyone leaves.

### Goals

- Peer Leaders will decide as a team how to share, highlight, and celebrate Trusted Adults stories with the rest of their school community

### Materials Needed

- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Chart paper, whiteboard space, or Sticky Notes
- Trusted Adult Charades prompts

A teal megaphone icon pointing to the right, positioned to the left of the 'WELCOME' section header.

### WELCOME (1-2 min)

Thank all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for joining the meeting. Last meeting, Peer Leaders made big moves by assigning roles, getting organized, and beginning to film their Trusted Adult stories. Today, they will shift from gathering stories to sharing them. Peer Leaders will work together to decide how they will bring this campaign to the rest of the school in a way that's meaningful, creative, and truly reflects the heart of what they have created.

### ONE PART FUN: GROUP CHARADES (TRUSTED ADULT EDITION) (10 min)

The games listed under the 'Fun' section of the campaign are suggested activities. Feel free to substitute them with other Sources games featured on page 151 of the [Field Guide](#), based on what best suits your group's comfort level and preferences.

**Objective:** Help students learn to recognize what makes someone a Trusted Adult through interactive movement, group teamwork, and shared reflection.

#### How to Play:

1. Set up two chairs side-by-side on one side of the room.
2. Have the group divide into two teams, and give them time to come up with a team name and a team chant.
3. Tell each team to pick the most dramatic (or best actor/loudest/funniest) player and send them to the front. Ask the two team members to take a seat on the chairs.
4. Explain that the groups will be playing competitive charades, but instead of ONE person acting out the prompts, the whole TEAM will be acting them out.
5. The two seated players will be the guessers.
6. The facilitator will stand behind the chairs and hold up prompts that reflect characteristics of Trusted Adults, possible titles of Trusted Adults, and/or names of Trusted Adults in your school or community.
7. Tell teams to cheer when they guess the prompt, so you know who got it first.
8. For each correct guess, tally a team point.

#### Rules:

- No sounds, noises, or sound effects
- No mouthing or whispering words
- No props—just your body and imagination!

#### Possible Trusted Adult Prompts to Act Out

- Good Listener
- Giving a motivational talk
- Gives you food
- Cheering you on at a game/performance
- Teacher
- School Counselor

- Coach
- Security Officer
- Bus Driver
- You can also write in the real names of the adults in your school or community that students know well (ex. Football Coach T, Miss K from the front office, Mr. W your 7th period teacher, Ms. B from the library)

## **ONE PART SHARING** (5-10 min)

“As we think about how to share this campaign, it’s a good reminder that sometimes the smallest acts leave the biggest impact. Trusted Adults don’t need grand gestures to make a difference; oftentimes they show up in quiet, consistent ways.”

In small groups or as one large group, have Peer Leaders reflect and answer this question:

1. What’s something an adult did for you that they probably didn’t think was a big deal, but it meant a lot to you?

Feel free to model this with a personal example. If time allows, invite a few groups to share their reflections with the whole room.

## **ONE PART PLANNING: SHARING OUR CAMPAIGN** (15-20 min)

“This campaign doesn’t just stop at making the video(s). We want to reach as many students as we can, so that means deciding how we’ll get these stories out into the world. Let’s decide together how we want to share this with the rest of our school and community.”

### **Step 1: Brainstorm Sharing Strategies**

Post 3 pieces of chart paper on the wall or use a whiteboard with the following questions:

1. **Where could we share our Trusted Adult videos?**  
(Examples: Student news, morning announcements, advisory time, school-wide assembly, hallway screens, school website, all-school movie night)
2. **How can we use social media?**  
(Examples: Instagram or TikTok reels, QR codes on posters, school accounts sharing a “Trusted Adult of the Week”)
3. **How can we invite others into the conversation?**  
(Examples: Set up a campaign table for students to write thank-you notes to a Trusted Adult, create a “Wall of Gratitude,” host a fun lunch event with Trusted Adults, host student vs Trusted Adult games/competitions.)

Have Peer Leaders rotate through the stations in small groups, adding ideas and circling the ones they’re most excited about.

### **Step 2: Make a Final Plan**

After the brainstorm, gather as a full group and talk through:

- Which options feel most realistic?
- What do we need to make each option happen?
- How will we share responsibilities?

Wrap up the meeting with a clear action plan and timeline for launching your video(s). This meeting time could also be used to edit videos, begin posting on social media, submit requests for morning announcements, etc.)

## **CLOSING** (1-2 min)

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Thank all the Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders for participating in the meeting. Ask Peer Leaders to go around, and each share one thing they are most excited to experience with the Trusted Adult Campaign. At your next meeting, you should take time to reflect on and celebrate the successes of your campaign cycle. You're welcome to use the provided [Campaign Reflection](#) template to help guide your discussion.

**Don't forget to share the time and date for the next meeting before everyone leaves.**

# CAMPAIGN REFLECTION

20-30 Minute Meeting



**CAMPAIGN:**

## Goal

Reflect on how our campaign went!

## Materials Needed

Templated Campaign Reflection Sheet (printed or Google copy)

1. What's one thing we can celebrate coming out of this campaign?

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2. If we were to do this campaign again, what's one thing we would do differently?

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3. If we were to do this campaign again, what would we add?

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4. Do we have a better understanding of \_\_\_\_\_ (belonging/identity, Connection, specific Strength)?

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5. Do others have a better understanding of \_\_\_\_\_ (belonging/identity, Connection, specific Strength)?

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Additional ideas or thoughts:

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