

MODULE SEVEN

In the content session, members examine illogical arguments and appeals to emotion. In the action session, members plan their community-service project.

CONTENT SESSION: DOES IT MAKE SENSE?

Effective citizens base important decisions on reasoned arguments and not on emotional appeals. In this session, members examine types of manipulative emotional appeals that often are used in advertising and other attempts to persuade. First, members read about types of these techniques. Then in pairs they identify an example of each type of emotional appeal.

Facilitator Checklist

- Pens and paper for members
- Copies of Handout 7A for members

Learning Objectives

Members will be able to:

1. Recognize different types of emotional appeals.
2. Identify examples of emotional appeals in the media.
3. Explain why it's important to recognize emotional appeals.

Notes

Does It Make Sense?

Introduction

Citizens need to make sound decisions based on accurate information and objective reasoning—not on emotional appeals. Since these appeals are widespread and often subtle, it pays to know how to recognize them.

I. Techniques to Watch Out For

- **Glittering generality.** Tries to associate the policy, politician, or product with some positive idea or feeling.
Example: "Support Candidate X. She believes in truth, justice, and the American way."
- **Name calling.** Relies on tagging an opponent or opposing idea with negative names, ideas, and associations.
Example: "You can't be for this proposal. Only a right-wing, fascist would support this proposal."
- **Bandwagon.** Asks you to join the crowd and not get left behind.
Example: "More than 60 percent of all Americans favor doing this. You should too."
- **Repetition.** Asks you to believe it because you've heard it so often.
Example: For months on radio, TV, newspaper, and billboard ads is the following: "The best candidate is X."
- **Plain folks.** Attempts to portray the individual or organization as just being ordinary people.
Example: "Vote for Y. He's one of us, not a Washington insider like Z."
- **Testimonial.** Asks you to take the word of a celebrity who is not an expert on the subject being discussed.
Example: "Hi, this is X (a rock star). I oppose this bill on nuclear energy. I urge you to write your Congressperson to vote against this bill."

II. Activity

In pairs, identify the technique of emotional appeal used in each example below.

1. In one year, a company runs a jingle on radio 10,000 times saying: "Toothpaste W gets your teeth brightest."
2. Announcer: "Let's ask the man on the street how he feels about Candidate X."
Man on the street: "I support Candidate X. She knows what it's like to be a working person."
3. "You don't want to be a vegetarian. Hitler was a vegetarian."
4. "Sign the petition. We've already got thousands of signatures."
5. "How can you not support Candidate Y? Practically every star in Hollywood has endorsed her."
6. "Candidate Z is a patriotic, freedom-loving, family man. Vote for Candidate Z."

III. For Discussion

1. What are some examples of these techniques that you've heard in the media?
2. Why do you think people use emotional appeals?
3. Why do you think it is important to recognize emotional appeals?

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Conducting the Session

1. Ask members: "What are some methods that people use to persuade others?" After a brief discussion, point out that one common method, especially in advertising, is an appeal to people's emotions.
2. Tell them today they are going to read about some types of these emotional appeals and then try to identify the different types. Distribute **Handout 7A**. Ask members to read the **Introduction** and **Section I: Techniques to Watch Out For**. When they finish, briefly answer any questions they may have.
3. Put members in pairs. Ask them to follow the directions in **Section II: Activity**.
4. Regroup and discuss the answers: 1. Repetition; 2. Plain Folks; 3. Name Calling; 4. Bandwagon; 5. Testimonial; 6. Glittering Generality.
5. Hold a discussion using the questions in **Section III: For Discussion**.

Optional Follow-up Activity

Ask members to find examples of these techniques in the media.

Notes

ACTION SESSION: PLANNING AN ACTION PROJECT

In this session, members plan their projects. First, they read about the components of a plan. Then they make their plans. Following this session, they do their projects in the community.

Facilitator Checklist

- Pens and paper for members
- Copies of Handout 7B, 7C, and 7D for members

Learning Objectives

Members will be able to:

1. Identify the components of a project plan.
2. Create a project plan.

Notes

Planning an Action Project

Introduction

You've selected a project. Your next step is to plan. By taking time to plan now, you will save time, energy, and heartbreak.

I. The Parts of a Project Plan

All the parts of a plan should fit together and support one another. Take this example:

Let's say you're concerned that kids don't use the park in a particular neighborhood. There is a park recreation center, but it is rundown and has no equipment. As a result, kids don't use the park. They just hang around and get into trouble. What is needed is more and better recreation equipment for the park. This is your **problem statement**.

Your **goal** might be to provide the park with equipment—swings, slides, balls.

Your plan should include **resources**—those who might help you in the community—especially government, non-profit, business, and media organizations. As resources, you might list businesses near the park, the city parks department, a non-profit that works with kids, and the local newspaper.

The **action steps** describe how you are going to do the project. Since it's always important to find out what the people you're helping want, the first step might be to conduct a survey of the kids about what kind of equipment they would like. The next step might be to find out if the city can provide it or if local merchants would be willing to chip in to buy it. A third step might be to raise some money to purchase the equipment.

The **task chart** supports the action steps. Who is going to do what, in which order, and how long will it take?

The **evaluation plan** asks you to determine in advance how you will measure the success of your project. Did you get the equipment? If, so, what and how much? Did the children use the equipment and the park? Did fewer kids hang around the streets and cause problems?

II. For Discussion

1. Why do you think planning is important?
2. Which part of the plan do you think will be most difficult to make? Why?

III. Activity

Divide into project teams. As a team, plan your project. Use **Handouts 7C** and **7D** to help you.

When your plan is done, show it to some members of the community whose opinion you value. Revise it accordingly. Once you're satisfied with your plan, begin your project.

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Conducting the Session

1. Inform members that they will plan their projects in this session.
2. Distribute **Handout 7B**. Ask members to read the **Introduction** and **Section I: The Parts of a Project Plan**.
3. Hold a discussion using the questions in **Section II: For Discussion**.
4. Distribute **Handouts 7C** and **7D** to members. Have them read and discuss these handouts.
5. Ask project teams to meet together and plan their projects. When each team finishes, review the plan and make suggestions, if necessary.
6. When the teams finish their plans, they should take it into the community as described in **Section III: Activity**. Once the plan is finalized, the team should begin taking action. Tell teams that they will report on their progress at the next action session.

Handout 7C

Handout 7D

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Filling Out the Project Plan

1. **Project Name.** Invent a catchy name for your project. Use it on anything you create for the project—fliers, posters, letterhead, etc.
2. **Team Members.** Write the names of your team members down. It's good to start thinking about the strengths and talents of each team member so you can make use of everyone on the project.
3. **Problem Statement.** State the problem clearly. It will help you focus on what you can do. Try to boil the problem down to a single sentence. Then briefly write what else you know by answering the following questions: What causes the problem? What are its effects on the community? What do people affected by the problem want done?
4. **Goal of Project.** A goal helps chart your course. If you know where you want to go, you can usually determine how to get there. In one sentence, write a specific and achievable goal.
5. **Description of Project.** In two or three sentences, summarize the project.
6. **Resources.** List different organizations (or individuals) who might help you with your project. Government, non-profit, and business organizations may be working on the problem or interested in it. Tap into these resources.
7. **Action Steps.** Your goal tells you where you're going. What steps do you need to take to get there? Write down the details of your plan. Explain how the project will work.
8. **Task Chart.** Once you have decided on the steps to your plan, break the steps down into tasks. Try to think of everything that needs to be done. Then assign people jobs that they want to do and can do. Put someone in charge of reminding people to do their tasks. Set a deadline, or due date, for each task.
9. **Evaluation Plan.** Take time now to figure out how you are going to measure the success of your project. There are several ways to evaluate a project. Pick the best ways and figure out how to do them for your project.

Before-and-After Comparisons. You can show how things looked or how people felt before your project, and then show how your project caused changed. You might use the following to make comparisons: photos, videos, survey results, or test scores.

Counting and Measuring. You can count or measure many different things in a project. For example: How many meetings did you have? How many people attended? How many students did you tutor? How much time did you spend? Numbers like these will help you measure your impact on the community.

Comparisons With a Control Group. You may be able to measure your project against a control group—a comparable group that your project does not reach. If, for example, you are trying to rid one part of town of graffiti, you could compare your results with conditions in another part of town facing the same problem.

Project Plan

1. Project Name

2. Team Members

3. Problem Statement

4. Goal of Project

5. Description of Project

6. Resources

Project Plan (Cont'd)

7. Action Steps

