



Resource: **Tips for Working With Adults**

Developed by the Advocates for Youth's Teen Council
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- ★ **Most adults have good intentions. Remember that they are simply not used to working in partnership with young people.**
- ★ **Criticism doesn't necessarily mean condescension or that an adult doesn't value your contribution. It may mean the adult is treating you the same way he/she would an adult colleague. Remember that adults are used to critiquing each other's work and offering constructive ideas to improve a project. Just because an adult doesn't agree with someone, it doesn't mean that he/she disrespects that person.**
- ★ **Adults may not be aware of the capabilities of young people. They can be told a hundred times that young people are mature, but showing them is the best way to make that case.**
- ★ **Adults often feel responsible for the success or failure of the project. This is what makes it hard for them to share power. They may need reassurance you are willing to share in both successes and failures.**
- ★ **Adults are just as uncertain as you; they've just learned to hide it better.**
- ★ **Sometimes adults use phrases and expressions, whether consciously or not, that annoy youth and are red flags that they aren't treating you as a partner. Like an annoying drip of water, these phrases and expressions can erode a relationship. Be prepared to call adults on their language.**
- ★ **Don't be afraid to ask for clarification. Adults often use words, phrases, and acronyms that you might not understand. Adults new to the program may also not understand them either. The language of the non-profit sector is riddled with terms that may bewilder any newcomer.**
- ★ **Don't be afraid to say "No" when you need to. Adults will understand that you have other important commitments, like your education, family, friends, hobbies and sports.**