

Asset Category Icons

Each of the eight Asset Categories has an icon associated to it.

These icons are in various Search Institute publications and have been adopted by some creative asset-builders as ways to enrich their asset trainings or when introducing the assets.

Here's how one Search Institute Trainer has used the icons:

Just SEEING the icons helps people to associate the categories with a metaphor (such as the heart for Support). I tape the icons to a visible spot in the room; adds interest and focus. I've add color to the icons and categories by mounting them on different color backgrounds (noting that the internal asset categories are secondary colors--with Positive Identity a tint of red--meaning belief and support of one's self):

- Red for SUPPORT,
- Yellow for EMPOWERMENT,
- Black/white for BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS,
- Blue for CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME (note that the external categories are all the primary colors--just as external assets are fundamental in a young person's life);
- Green for COMMITMENT TO LEARNING, Orange for POSITIVE VALUES,
- Purple for SOCIAL COMPETENCIES, and
- Pink for POSITIVE IDENTITY.

I've used the icons for people to sort themselves into 8 groups (either by color coding--or use of the category labels). They discuss why that asset category is important in a young person's life, what it looks like when they have it, and how to build that category intentionally. This greatly increases retention of the categories.

Then, I have the groups become marketing mavericks and convince the other 7 groups that their category is THE essential category. They create a memorable presentation--using the symbol, a related song, a gesture, roleplay, etc. I strongly encourage this kind of connection to the icon. I recall one group in Texas coming up with a version of the SOUND OF MUSIC's "So Long, Farewell..." scene for Constructive Use of Time...very effective.

I also ask participants to create a circle of support using the 8 categories. I actually have community roles that coordinate to the 8 asset categories--for example, a PARENT might represent SUPPORT (color coded red) and an ADVISOR/COACH/DIRECTOR might represent CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME (color coded blue). This is a take off on something that another Search Institute Trainer had created--once again using colors very intentionally to reinforce the categories.

As we say so often in asset building, intentionality and redundancy are critical. The use of the icons brings the words to life--and the color associations increase memory!

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