

CONNECTING THE DOTS: HEALTH AS ART

# Peer Project Poetry

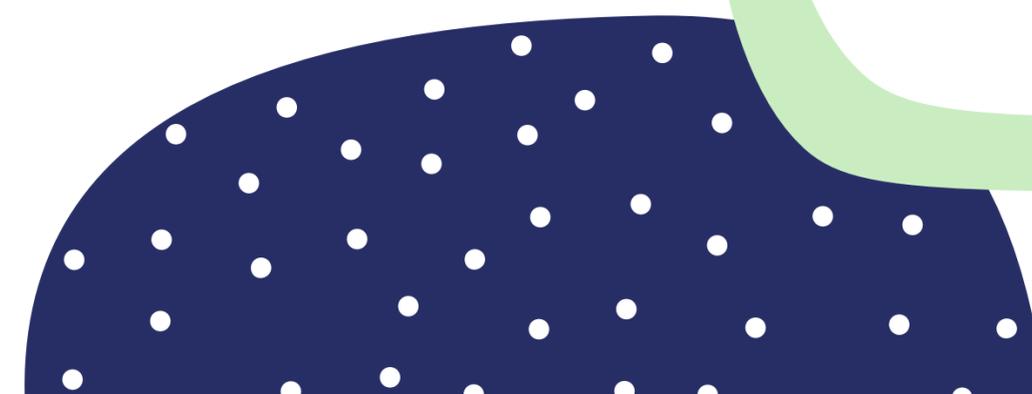
An art-based social-emotional health activity for peer leadership-based learning.





# What is peer leadership-based learning?

Peer leadership-based learning is all about inspiring others through healthy behaviors and actions, and providing guidance and support for our peers to do the same. It helps us develop self-confidence and personal agency, as well as collaboration, communication, and goal-setting skills. Peer leadership-based learning helps us enhance the world around us through collective action and prosocial behaviors!



# Connecting the Dots

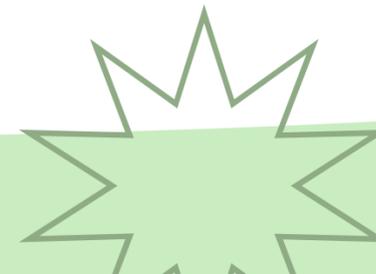
Organizing and leading the creation of a student art-based group such as Peer Project Poetry, helps us learn and apply skills to lead, connect, and create:

**Lead** - Grow skills needed to support guiding others and modeling healthy, prosocial behaviors

**Connect** - Practice inclusivity by bringing your peers together to align behind a shared goal, feeling, or vision

**Create** - Use art to design or produce something new that represents your feeling, experience, perspective or culture

By using art, like poetry, to organize and advocate for a student group, we can reach people with our message in a more inclusive way. When done through the lens of a peer leadership project, it allows us the opportunity to grow our self-reflection, personal agency, confidence, and communication skills, while building new relationships and exploring new outlets for creativity.

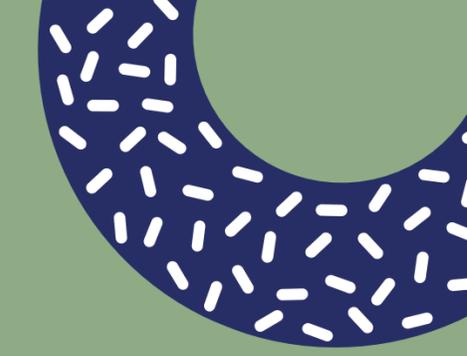


# Peer Project Poetry

Lead // Connect // Create

When stepping in to a peer leadership role, you are empowered to grow your own skills related to organizing, collaborating, conflict resolution, and more, while simultaneously modeling healthy behaviors to your peers and others around you.

Combine peer leadership with art-based activities like our Peer Project Poetry for a new way to lead, connect, and create! Discover how organizing a student group of your peers around poetry not only helps to build new skills, but also builds new friendships and self-confidence.



**○ Lead**  
 Present your plan to your school leadership for approval and to get support from teachers.



**○ Lead**  
 Draft a plan that outlines the vision, steps you'll take to organize peers, and what the benefit will be to your school community.

# ORGANIZE A PEER PROJECT POETRY

**○ Connect**  
 Connect with your peers to spread the word, share your vision, and encourage engagement.



**○ Create**  
 Launch your student group! Celebrate your creation and your role in organizing something new and valuable to your peers.



**○ Connect**  
 Connect with other school staff and/or community members to determine a space to hold your Project Poetry meetings and any other materials you may need.



# Mix Up Your Poetry

Poetry is a fluid art that can take many different shapes and styles. Make your Peer Project Poetry group more inclusive by expanding what's defined as "poetry"!



## Spoken Word

This version of poetry is typically designed around rhythm and rhyme, and often is related to music. It commonly is used when performing poetry referring to topics of social justice. With ties to slam poetry, it is also often coupled with other performance art.



## Singing Word

This version of poetry can also take multiple forms - traditional singing and songwriting, or performing traditional written poetry in song form, using musical backgrounds like a guitar or piano. When coupled with music and a melody, most poems can be translated into a singing performance.



## Moving Words

This version of poetry couples interpretive dance or movement with traditional poetry. Performers, or poets, use their bodies to represent the feelings, emotions, and experiences expressed by the poetry words. It may be choreographed, or it may be reflective of the performers true feelings in the moment.

# Leadership in the Classroom

Lead // Connect // Create

Peer Project Poetry can be leveraged to build leadership skills and others that go along with it, such as self-confidence, personal agency, collaboration, and more, at the classroom level, too. Here's a project to translate these lessons and objectives to your group of students:

Randomly assign students to one of three groups - spoken, singing, and moving.

Once assigned roles, allow students to form groups of three, ensuring that each group has one person of each role.

Task students with working collaboratively to create a poem to perform as a combination of spoken, singing, and moving words.

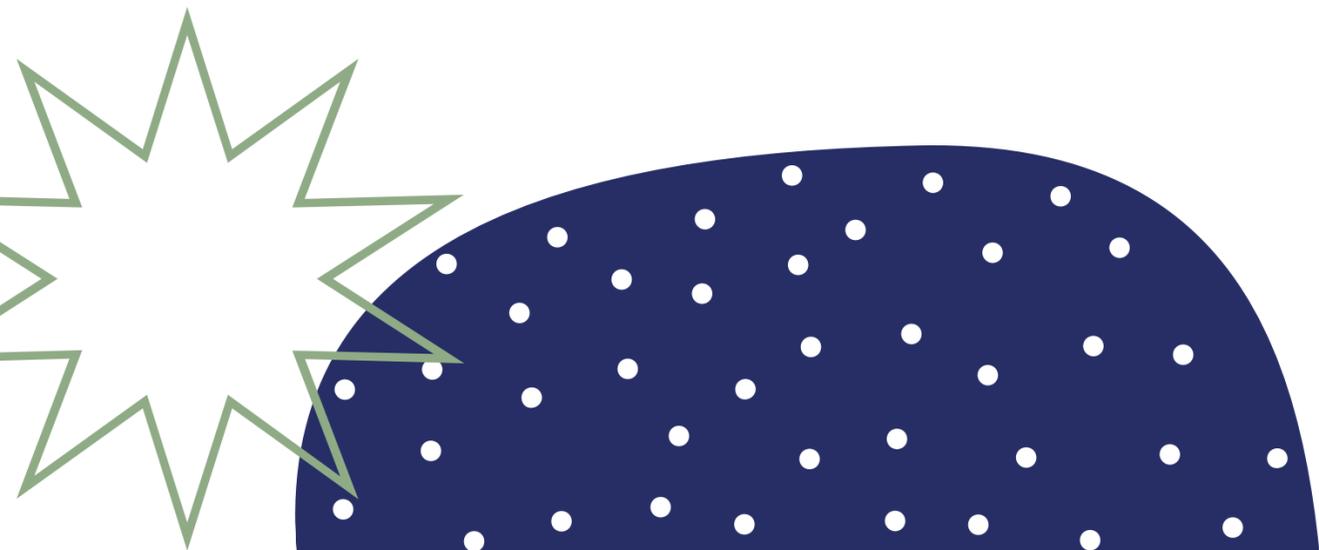


# Art-based Leadership at Home

Although schools and communities are wonderful environments for teens to advance their leadership skills, these skills are developed and refined at home. As a caregiver, you can provide the kids in your life with the space and the tools necessary to grow into confident leaders among their peers using variations of projects like an art-based awareness campaign.

Collaboration, motivation, organizing others around similar goals or interests, and modeling positive behaviors, are skills important for peer leadership that can all be encouraged at home. Provide opportunities for the teens in your life to foster these skills using ideas such as:

- Creating a family schedule collage to organize household appointments, tasks and activities
- Organizing and coordinating a family trip to a local museum or art exhibition
- Writing a story, song, or poem to showcase a cause important to you



# Reflective Wrap-Up

## For student leaders:

- What challenges did you have while organizing and starting your Peer Project Poetry? What successes did you have?
- How did you feel in your role as a leader of the Capture Your Community project? What parts felt natural? What parts felt like a challenge?
- What did you learn about yourself while in this leadership role? Did any of this surprise you? Why or why not?

## For student participants:

- What parts of the Peer Project Poetry took you out of your comfort zone?
- How did using spoken, singing, or moving words alter the performance or your interpretation of the poem?
- How else can student-led groups or group projects be used to explore new types of art and creativity?
- What did you learn about yourself during this project? Did any of this surprise you? Why or why not?