



Skills for Success Program

Philosophy

OC Human Relations' BRIDGES School Inter-group Relations Program has developed a curriculum that can positively change at-risk students' academic outcomes and, as a result, their lives.

The Skills for Success Program helps students who are performing below expectations and assists them in the areas of goal setting, self-esteem, developing communication skills, decision-making, and academic planning.

We believe there are many factors that contribute to and influence a student's performance in school, but when at-risk students receive this level of intervention and if they continue to receive follow-up support and encouragement from their school community, they will excel. Those who are engaged in these endeavors learn to take pride in their work in and out of the classroom, to invest in the future of their school and to share their positive experiences with others.

Program Description

The program begins with a consultation with school administration and a staff coordinator. The consultation provides a program overview as well as an inventory of possible resources and existing programs on campus.

Following the consultation, BRIDGES Staff works with administrators and the site coordinator to identify students who might become participants. The identified students are invited to an orientation to the program, after which they may choose to commit to participate. The site coordinator will send a formal letter to the parents or guardians of students who agree to participate for the purpose of confirming their commitment.

The class meets one period a week, with the time set on a rotating basis between periods 2 through 4. This rotating basis lets students avoid missing the same class weekly. The program targets periods 2-4 because they suit most class schedules and the program seems to work best when administered before lunch.

Program Requirements

A successful Skills for Success Program requires the active involvement of a number of participants. This section specifies roles and responsibilities for a school to carry out a partnership with OC Human Relations.

- Administration must attend a consultation with OCHRC staff and complete all of the required paperwork.
- Identify and secure a Site Coordinator (Administrator, TOSA, Teacher, or Counselor).
- Identify and recruit students to participate in the program, must be voluntary participants.
- Identify and secure location and time slot for program's implementation during the school day (not during lunch).
- Send formal letter to parents or guardians of the participating students.
- Arrange for students to attend the scheduled sessions.
- Site Coordinator MUST commit to being present during each session for its entirety.
- Principal must agree to attend one session for the purpose of conducting a graduation requirements presentation and reassuring his/her support to the students.
- Arrange for any necessary A/V equipment, transportation, substitutes, distributing/collecting permission slips, etc.

Skills for Success Curriculum Outline

Lesson 1: Program Introduction. Students learn the program goals and process. A short activity to gets them acquainted with one another. Ground rules designed to provide a safe space are established. Pre-Surveys are administered.

Lesson 2: Self-Esteem/Identity. Students examine their roles in society, their families and school, the personal attributes that make them unique, and how these affect their academic performance.

Lesson 3: Cycle of Violence. An introduction to an analysis of why violence exists in the community and the punitive cycle it creates for youth when not addressed properly is offered. Students have time to share reflections about their school community and work to identify the root causes of their personal struggles.

Lesson 4: Conflict Styles. Students are lead through group and individual processes that help them identify their attitude about conflict and their conflict style.

Lesson 5: Managing Conflict. Options for addressing group and/interpersonal conflict are explored. Participants must solve problems as a team and role play positive responses to conflict.

Lesson 6: Goal Setting. Students create worksheets that help them set their short and long-term goals and break them into the smaller steps that are required to reach their goals.

Lesson 7: Cost of Living. What are the realities? The "Cost of Living" lesson simulates the true cost of living after high school. The purpose is to lead to an understanding of the importance of education as a foundation for achieving multiple goals and creating realistic expectations.

Lesson 8: Decision Making. This session helps students examine the link between their personal values and their decision making process.

Lesson 9: Principal Visit. This essential session gives the Principal a chance to connect with students. The principal presents graduation requirements and walks students through their transcripts to determine what they need to do to graduate on time. It also gives the students an opportunity to see their Principal in a different setting and see that s/he cares about each of them as individuals.

Lesson 10: Listening and Communication Skills. This session on mindful communication and listening skills teaches students how to recognize their own communication styles and ethnocentric biases, how to be sensitive to the context of others and how to appreciate differences in communication.

Lesson 11: Reaching Your Goals. Staff conducts one-on-one sessions with students to help them assess their long-term plans and next steps for reaching their goals.

Lesson 12 (optional): Capstone Retreat and/or College Campus Tour. Students are rewarded with an all-day human relations retreat facilitated by BRIDGES Staff. Students will engage in a reflection process where they evaluate and update the plans they have made in the program and are challenged to expand the scope of their plans to include their contributions to their community and the people they impact day-to-day. This retreat can also help students to transition into the BRIDGES Program where applicable.

Graduation: Program Evaluation and Graduation. Students celebrate their accomplishments and are invited to share a verbal reflection on their experience. Certificates of Completion are given and students provide a written evaluation of the program. Post-surveys are administered.