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Building Strong Women:
Addressing the Needs of At-Risk Pre-Teen Girls

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Author Note

This capstone report prepared for CHHS 400B

Abstract

Too many young, pre-teen girls are at risk of consequences including teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, low education levels and more. Many girls find themselves in these situations due to at-risk factors such as the absence of parents, low family income, having disabilities, being retained in school, etc. During my senior year internship at Community Solutions, a non-profit organization in Gilroy, California, I addressed self-esteem issues and lack of life skills and social skills that 10-12 year old girls face on a daily basis. My goal was to reach out and empower them, hoping to build self-esteem and teach important life and social skills necessary for transition into adolescence. Using pre-tests, post-tests, and True/False Trivia quizzes, I compared two curricula to determine which was more beneficial to the girls.

Keywords: pre-teen, at-risk, girls, self-esteem, life skills, social skills, curriculum

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Building Strong Women: Addressing the Needs of At-Risk Pre-Teen Girls

I. Problem Description

Problem Definition

All over the world, one is able to look in schools, streets, and homes in their communities and find a certain amount of “at-risk youth”. This being the case, it is important to realize that this term has many definitions, and it is often difficult to narrow it down to a single characterization. However, a United States based organization called the National At-Risk Education Network—or NAREN—has defined it pretty well:

“Students are placed at-risk when they experience a significant mismatch between their circumstances and their needs, and the capacity or willingness of the school to accept, accommodate, and respond to them in a manner that supports and enables their maximum social, emotional and intellectual growth and development.” (NAREN)

The ability of the school or other community resources to attend to these needs is an important aspect in addressing the many factors that place children at risk. Kominski (2001) claims that children face both personal and familial risk factors. The personal factors that girls may face include having disabilities, speaking English “less than well”, and being retained in school (Kominski, 2001). According to Kominski, 5.5% of girls in the United States have at least one disability, 5.8% of girls were retained in school at least once, and 4.7% of girls reported speaking English less than well (Refer to Appendix B). Familial factors may include those such as “the absence of either or both parents from the household the child resides in; at least one foreign-born parent of recent immigration; low family income; and the absence of any employed parent or guardian in the household” (Kominski, 2001). For example, regarding family factors, 31.3% of girls across the United States live with less than both parents, whether it be with one

parent or no parent at all. Of those who do live with a parent or guardian, 10.5% of these girls are in a home where neither parent/guardian is employed.

According to Kominski’s data in Table 1, 36% of children in the United States have faced a familial factor, while 18% of children have experienced a personal factor which places them at risk. Often, children face more than one factor which puts them at risk; 43.9% of girls in the United States experience at least one factor, and 16.2% of girls in the U.S. face two or more factors that cause them to be at risk (Kominski, 2001). These numbers are fairly consistent across the regions; Table 1 shows the percentage of children experiencing risk factors in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West: in the Western region, which includes California, 17.2% of all children have faced two or more factors in their lifetime. Finally, according to Table 1, 18% of all 10-13 year olds suffer from two or more factors. Looking at these numbers (see Table 1 in its entirety in Appendix A), it is clear that there are too many at-risk pre-teen girls in California.

Table 1: Multiple Risk Factors for Various Sociodemographic Subgroups

Number and type of risk factors		Sex			Age			Region			
	Total	Male	Female	5-9	10-13	14-17	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	
Personal											
	0	82.3%	78.8%	85.8%	83.9%	82.1%	80.3%	83.3%	85.0%	81.5%	79.8%
	1	15.5%	18.1%	12.8%	83.9%	15.4%	16.7%	14.3%	13.1%	16.0%	18.2%
2+		2.3%	3.1%	1.4%	83.9%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	1.9%	2.6%	2.0%
	2	2.2%	3.0%	1.4%	83.9%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	1.9%	2.6%	1.9%
	3	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	83.9%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Family											
	0	63.6%	63.7%	63.4%	64.4%	63.2%	63.0%	64.4%	66.4%	61.0%	63.9%
	1	25.1%	25.0%	25.2%	23.8%	25.4%	26.4%	23.6%	23.7%	26.8%	25.3%
2+		11.3%	11.4%	11.4%	11.8%	11.4%	10.6%	12.0%	10.0%	12.2%	10.8%
	2	8.0%	8.1%	8.0%	8.2%	8.1%	7.8%	7.9%	7.2%	8.6%	8.0%
	3	3.3%	3.1%	3.4%	3.6%	3.3%	2.9%	4.0%	2.8%	3.6%	2.8%
	4	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Combined											
	0	54.2%	52.4%	56.1%	55.7%	53.9%	52.7%	56.1%	58.9%	50.9%	52.8%
	1	28.3%	28.8%	27.7%	27.4%	28.2%	29.5%	26.3%	25.4%	30.2%	30.0%
2+		17.5%	18.8%	16.2%	16.9%	18.0%	17.9%	17.7%	15.8%	18.9%	17.2%
	2	11.4%	12.1%	10.6%	11.0%	11.6%	11.7%	10.3%	10.7%	12.6%	11.2%
	3	4.7%	5.0%	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	4.5%	5.5%	3.9%	4.8%	4.7%
	4	1.3%	1.5%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%
	5	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Source: Kominski, R., Jamieson, A., & Martinez, G. (2001). *At risk conditions of U.S. school-age children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census: Population Division. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0052/twps0052.html>

Being “At-Risk”: The Consequences

Based on research, it appears that these individual and familial factors of girls being at risk lead to a wide variety of negative consequences such as teenage pregnancy, drug use, lower education levels, mental health problems, and criminal or antisocial behavior (Grayson).

According to one source, 750,000 teens in the United States get pregnant every year; this comes to about 113 out of every 1000 girls in the U.S. (DoSomething.org, 2012). This source states that this can also effect a young girl’s education, saying only one third of teen mothers earn their high school diploma. Drug use is also an issue for young girls. Not only is all underage use increasing, but “young girls are drinking and using tobacco and drugs at a higher rate than boys their age” (National Crime Prevention Council, 2012).

As shown in Figure 1, juvenile delinquency is also a big consequence of being at risk. In California alone in 2010, there were 28,265 kids ages 12-14 who were arrested for misdemeanor offenses, in addition to 1,438 kids under 12 years old. Also, 23,911 12-14 year olds and 1,063 kids younger than 12 years old were referred to court (California Department of Justice). There are numerous consequences that can come from being at-risk, and if young girls aren’t given the tools and knowledge they need to raise their self-esteem and have success, then these consequences will only continue to grow.

Risk Factors for Pre-Teen Girls: The Roots

Figure 1 shows that self-esteem plays a huge factor in why girls become considered at-risk. According to Anita Gurian, a professor at the NYU School of Medicine (2012), by the age of 15, girls are twice as likely to become depressed as boys. She relates this self-esteem issue to girls’ perceptions of their body image, saying that starting in the pre-teen years, girls begin to passionately focus on their body, and that girls feel they cannot live up to society’s standards. In

fact, in a chapter written by Jennifer Martin in *Teenage Violence and Victimization* (2011), Martin claims that about one half of all girls do not like their bodies. Gurian (2012) supports this by discussing the effects of the media: intentional or not, television shows, movies, music lyrics, magazines, etc. portray females in a sexual manner, no matter the age, as the models that young girls should look up to, and when pre-teens fail to do so, their self-esteem rapidly declines. Gurian (2012) adds that young girls' self-esteem is threatened because girls ages 10-12 begin being confronted with issues such as dating and sex. Many girls this age may be "not only unable to voice their sexual desires (or lack thereof), but they may also be unable to express their desire to say no to sexual advances because they do not know how" (Martin, 2011, p. 45). The ability to say "no", commonly referred to as having good refusal skills, is one of many social skills that girls this age need to have but often do not.

Young girls, as well as children and adolescents in general, need to know the consequences of certain risky behaviors such as eating unhealthily, succumbing to peer-pressure, being overly trusting on social networking sites, and abusing substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. According to Kumpalainen and Roine (2002), as noted by the organization known as Parents: The Anti-Drug, "...girls, who at age 12 were low in self-esteem, were nearly two and a half times likelier to engage in heavy alcohol use at age 15 than those higher in self-esteem". Since self-esteem has such a big connection, it is important for young children to learn refusal skills to not only build their confidence in responding to tough situations, but to keep them safe from harming themselves, as supported by Education.com, Inc. (2012). Refusal skills are easy to learn, but often tough to implement, because "[girls] are afraid of losing a friends, looking uncool, or being left out of a crowd" (Carney, 2007). Giving in to peer-pressure is often easier because, unfortunately, one's social status is one of the top priorities

of middle- and high-school age children. Learning the essential life and social skills to stay healthy both physically and mentally is necessary for pre-teen girls to succeed in living up to their potential.

Figure 1



II. Field Agency, Alternatives, and Justification

Field Agency: Community Solutions

Community Solutions is an organization that has three branches located in Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose, California which serve the communities of South Santa Clara County, South San Jose and San Benito County. According to their website, it was originally founded in 1972 as a teen drop-in center, but has grown significantly and now provides prevention, intervention, treatment, and residential services for a variety of populations through five different divisions: Mental Health Services, Youth Support Services, Solutions to Violence Services, Court and Community Referred Services, and Transitional Residential Housing Services.

The mission of this organization is “to create opportunities for positive change by promoting and supporting the full potential of individuals, the strengths of families, and the well-being of our community” (Community Solutions, 2011). The mission statement makes it clear that the goal is not to change the individuals themselves, rather to provide the tools for the clients to make the changes on their own, so they can become more independent. Community Solutions believes it is important to provide “the assistance, skills and support [their] clients need to build healthy, productive and independent lives...[and] help them open the doors to hope and change.” This strategy would hopefully create a more permanent change which would stay with their clients for the rest of their lives, opposed to only temporarily assisting them with whatever their current problem may be.

Actions to Address this Issue

Young girls often lack the skills and knowledge to deal with social pressures, make positive decisions, have raised self-esteem, and be healthy in general. Community Solutions addresses this problem mostly through their Youth Support Services and Mental Health Services which offer a variety of programs: the Restorative Justice Program, which works with youth who are first time offenders; the Independent Living Skills Program which helps empower youth to have success in their future by focusing on permanence, education, and employment; and Children Services by offering therapy, rehabilitation, case management, and medication support services. These programs offer the tools and opportunities that children need to be successful in learning the skills and attitudes necessary for growing mentally, physically, and socially into young adults.

Action One: No Action

There are a variety of actions that I could have chosen from to address the issues that young girls face on a day to day basis. The first action I could choose to take was no action at all: according to what staff members at Community Solutions have said, there are fairly high success rates among their programs which somewhat address this issue. Therefore, many may think that if a program is already successful, there is no need to evaluate or enhance these programs in any way. There is even a chance that, if I were to try to change the programs or do something different with the clients, it could have a potentially *negative* effect on the youth and be less helpful than the programs that were originally in place. However, some may say that if there isn't a 100% success rate, then there is always something that could be improved or done differently.

Action Two: Enhance the Current Curriculum

An alternative action I could have taken would be to evaluate and, based on my findings, enhance the curriculum that is currently used with youth at Community Solutions. The Restorative Justice Program helps teens who are first-time offenders learn how to make better decisions, create better opportunities for themselves, and gain more self-respect. Many of these teens are at the point where they are either acting out because they are lacking social skills, or they have stopped caring because they believe they are stuck in this cycle with no way out. In this and many other programs, the Why Try curriculum is used, which is a workshop designed to focus on dropout prevention, school violence prevention, and truancy reduction (whytry.org, 2011). This program is still fairly new—just a few months old—so simply evaluating the program could have been beneficial to the organization. However, I would also have wanted to take the next step and create strategies to enhance the program. The evaluation piece of the project would have occurred in the first semester, and would entail surveying the kids and

determining if the group meetings and the curriculum that was used had any positive effect of them. The surveys would measure their attitudes on several factors of their lives before and after they completed all their group sessions, as well as any changes that were made regarding these attitudes. In the second semester, I would either implement activities and strategies in addition to the current curriculum, change the current curriculum somewhat so that the youths receive the information in a different way, or perhaps even try out a completely new curriculum that may or may not have a better outcome than the current curriculum RJP uses today.

Action Three: Creating a New Curriculum

A third action I could have chosen from was to create a completely new curriculum that integrates pieces of the Why Try curriculum along with new materials and activities. The goal of this project would be to focus on pre-teen girls ages 10-12 by facilitating two groups in a six week program: one group would be taught the Why Try curriculum, and the other would be taught the new Life Skills curriculum which I created. I would see how beneficial the new curriculum is for girls, questioning whether it is worth it to have other subjects introduced to the group besides what Why Try provides. There would be pre-tests and post-tests to determine what knowledge and skills were gained in the two groups, and then there would be an analysis of these results to determine which curriculum benefited the girls the most, or even whether the new curriculum benefited them at all. There would also be quizzes which would assess how much of the information the girls retained from the group. Based on these results, I would first determine what changes could be made to enhance the new curriculum, and then determine if this curriculum should be recommended to remain in the program or if it should just be thrown out.

Justification for Chosen Action

For my Capstone project, I completed my third possible action, in which I created a curriculum geared toward girls to see if it would be more or less beneficial than the Why Try curriculum. This mission of the Why Try program is “To help people achieve freedom, opportunity, and self-respect through education and interventions that motivate and create positive change” (whytry.org, 2011). This curriculum, while it is a good tool, is more intervention-focused than it is preventative. “At-risk” pre-teen girls are experiencing factors that may cause them to suffer from certain consequences—but they have not suffered from them yet. Therefore, one of the goals of this project was to create a tool that prevents consequences from happening to these at-risk girls in the first place.

While boys may have stressors in their lives, girls between the ages of 10 and 12 have plenty of issues to stress about as well, which boys may not experience. One example of a stressor these girls have is going through puberty and starting their periods: according to the Kids Health organization (2011), “some girls start puberty at age 8, and others may start as late as 13 or 14.” So the girls in this group may have either recently started going through puberty, or may not have even started quite yet. Another reason I focused on girls in this project is because teen pregnancy has a fairly high rate, especially among low-income children. According to the California Department of Education (2011), “poor and low-income teens—who make up approximately 40% of the adolescent population—account for 83% of teens who give birth and 85% of those who become an unmarried parent.” Because of this, it is important to reach out to not just low-income pre-teenage girls, but to pre-teen girls in general, so as to prevent as many young pregnancies as possible. With the realization that pregnancy, puberty, and periods are not the only things girls have to worry about, I would implemented my new curriculum in hopes of

making a positive difference in their lives in a way that the Why Try curriculum alone would not have been able to do.

III. Implementation

Project Goal

- The goal of this project was to reach out to and empower pre-teen girls, ages 10-12, in order to build their self-esteem and teach them important life and social skills necessary for the tough transition into adolescence.

Primary Project Objectives

- Objective 1: Have 100% of the participants increase their knowledge of life and social skills by retaining 80% of the material by the end of the workshop.
- Objective 2: Have 100% of the girls increase their self-esteem in at least one of five categories, which are self, school, family, friends/peers, and life.

Detailed Project Implementation Timeline

The following are seven steps I completed to realize these objectives:

1. Create a New Curriculum

- The curriculum that I created needed to incorporate the Why Try curriculum, which is what Community Solutions already uses, so my goal was to simply build off this curriculum and use it in a slightly different way. The curriculum was created for a six week group. The first week was the general introduction to the group: this included introducing myself, using an ice breaker activity to introduce the girls, explaining rules such as confidentiality and mandated reporting, and decorating and discussing activity folders and journals. Each week had a Question of the Day: for example, the first question of the day, which, as all questions of

the day do, introduced the topic for the next week, asked “What does it mean to you to be healthy?” The topics for weeks 2-6 were as follows: Health and its Challenges: a Teen’s Point of View; Substance Abuse; Dealing with Peer Pressure and Strong Relationship Influences in an Assertive Positive Way; Setting Boundaries; and Self-Esteem Building/Hidden Dangers of the Internet. Each of these weeks included Questions of the Day, Skills of the Week, group activities, and True/False Trivia. (See Appendix C for this curriculum.)

2. Create Why Try Only Curriculum

- The point of this step was to have a Why Try based curriculum which can be used for the control group which I compared my new curriculum to. This curriculum used visual handouts, such as ones called the Reality Ride, Climbing Out, and Tearing Off Labels. The Reality Ride discussed decision making skills, and was taught in weeks 2 and 3. Climbing Out addressed peer pressure, and was discussed in weeks 4 and 5. Tearing Off Labels, taught in week 6, discussed not living up to negative images people have of you, but creating and living up to your own positive labels. Even though this curriculum was somewhat different, it still covered the same topics as the other curriculum. (See Appendix D for this curriculum.)

3. Create Pre/Post Surveys

- In order to evaluate whether or not the new curriculum was beneficial to the girls in the group, pre- and post-surveys were given to the girls at the beginning and end of the groups. These surveys allowed me to gauge whether or not the girls gained new knowledge and skills to prepare them for adulthood. These tests also

let me know whether or not Community Solutions should keep the new curriculum for future use, or whether it should be thrown out. I also used True/False Trivia Quizzes to assess whether or not the girls retained any of the material taught to them throughout the group. (See Appendix E for this survey, and Appendices F-J for the True/False Trivia Quizzes).

4. Facilitate Groups

- The next step included actually facilitating the groups. I facilitated two groups for six weeks each: the control group was taught the Why Try curriculum and the experimental group was taught the new curriculum that I created. For each of these groups, I gave the pre-tests, post-tests and the trivia quizzes to evaluate the success of each group.

5. Evaluate Data

- In this step, I evaluated the data gained from the pre- and post-surveys given at the beginning and end of each group, the True/False Trivia quizzes, and general observations. I compared the data to see if there were any differences in results between the control group and experimental group. Based on these results, I determined the positives and negatives of the new curriculum, and decided whether this curriculum would be worth using again or not.

6. Recommendations

- I presented my findings to Community Solutions, telling them the results of the pre- and post-surveys as well as the True/False Trivia quizzes. We discussed the positives and negatives of the new curriculum, and whether they should keep the curriculum or not, as well as any changes that should possibly be made to it.

7. Final Presentation/Evaluation

- This last step required me to analyze the success of my project and report my findings to my class. I described my step by step process, the success and failures of the project, and what I felt I could have done different.

IV. Evaluation

Evaluation Design

For the evaluation piece of this project, I used a quantitative design to analyze the data acquired from both my control group (Why Try curriculum) and experimental group (Life Skills curriculum).

In order to measure the success of the project quantitatively, I used two tools: pre- and post-tests, and True/False Trivia quizzes. The pre- and post-tests were exactly the same, and were given at the beginning of the first week of group to both the control and experimental groups. This test included ten questions: five questions asked the participants about their self-health, and the other five questions asked about their comfort levels in certain areas of concern, including saying “no” and making decisions, as well as the importance to them regarding certain topics, such as eating healthy or refusing substances (See Appendix E).

The True/False Trivia quizzes were used to evaluate how much information the girls retained each week. These quizzes were given in weeks 2-6, as the first week was simply the introduction. At the end of each group session, the girls were given a quiz composed of 10 true/false questions that related to the topic of that week. Quiz topics included: Nutrition and Self-Care; Substance Abuse; Peer Pressure/Teen Violence; Setting Boundaries; and Hidden Dangers on the Internet and Self-Esteem (this last quiz had to combine two topics in order to maintain the six-week timeframe). Refer to Appendices F-J for details on the quizzes.

There were a couple limitations to this design that did not appear to impact the project too much, but still had an effect. For example, the pre- and post-tests did not take into consideration that perhaps the participant was having a bad day or a good day. Therefore, one is unable to gauge if there were really any improvements made overall, or if the participants just happened to feel a certain way on that day that they took the pre- or post-test. Another limitation was that the True/False Trivia quizzes did not take into consideration how much knowledge of life and social skills the girls may have already had before the group. The quizzes only measured how much information the participants retained after the topic was concluded. Therefore, while the designs did a decent job at measuring the self-esteem and knowledge of life and social skills, the results may be skewed.

Evaluation Results

In the pre- and post-test, the participants in each group were asked, “On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel about...” in five separate categories, including “Yourself”, “Family”, “School”, “Friends/Peers”, and “Life”. In each group, the data from both tests were analyzed to see in how many categories each participant got better scores, worse scores, or if their scores stayed the same on their post-tests than their pre-tests. As shown in Figure 2, which represents the results of the participants in the experimental Life Skills Group, participant A (the participants were assigned letters so as to maintain confidentiality) got a better score on her post-test than her pre-test in one category, but got worse scores in the other four categories. However, overall, 71.4% of the girls in this group got better scores in at least one category.

Figure 2

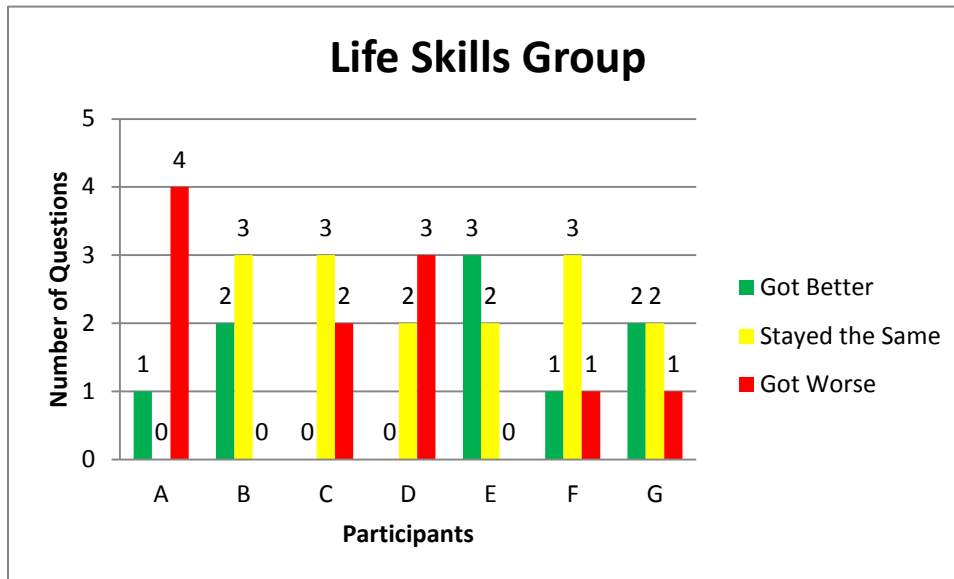
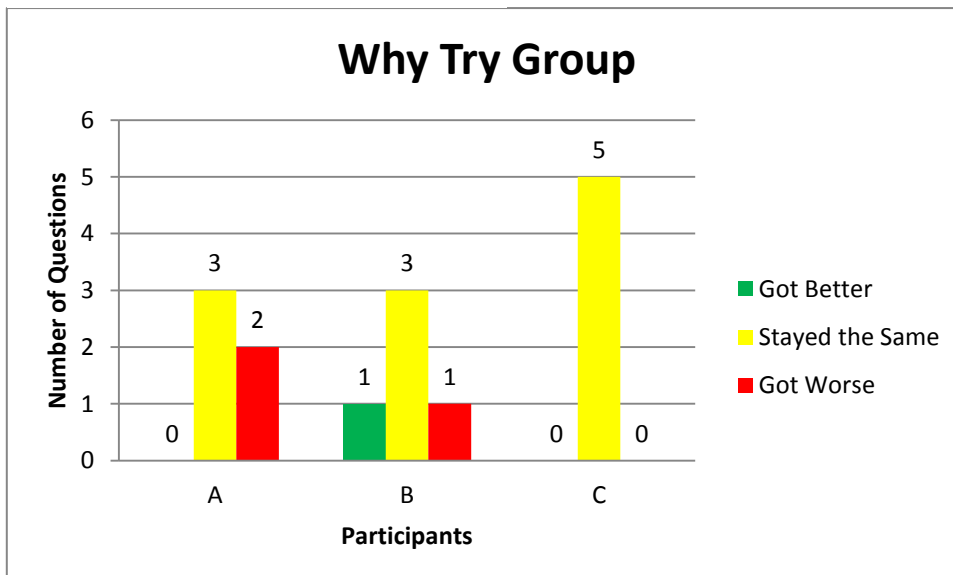


Figure 3 shows the same data relative to the results of the control Why Try Group. In this group (which was unfortunately limited by the small number of participants), only one member got a better score on the post-test than on the pre-test in at least one category. For the most part, the scores among the participants stayed the same between the pre- and post-test. Overall, only 33% of the participants in the control group improved their score in at least one category.

Figure 3



The post-test also asked the participants their opinions on the importance or ease of a variety of topics. The results were as follows: 100% of the members in both the Life Skills Group and the Why Try Group felt that it was either Fairly Important or Very Important to exercise and eat healthy; 100% of the Life Skills Group participants felt it was Fairly or Very Important to refuse substances, while only 33% of the Why Try Group participants felt this way; 47% of the Life Skills girls felt it was either Fairly Easy or Very Easy to make decisions, while 66% of the Why Try girls felt these levels of ease; and, 57% of the experimental Life Skills Group felt it was Fairly or Very Easy to say “no”, and 33% of the control Why Try Group felt saying “no” was Fairly or Very Easy.

The True/False Trivia quizzes measured how much information the participants retained after learning about the various topics in the six week program. After each 10-question quiz was given, they were graded, with each question being worth ten percent. As shown in Figure 4, the average scores of each participant of all five quizzes are represented. In the Life Skills group, all participants averaged a grade of at least a 90%, with the highest average being 100%. Taking all these percentages into consideration, the average participant score for all the quizzes was 94.9%. According to Figure 5, the participants in the Why Try group maintained averages between 85% and 97%. Unfortunately, not all the participants averaged an “A” on their quizzes, but the average participant score among the three of them on their quizzes was a 90.6%.

Figure 4

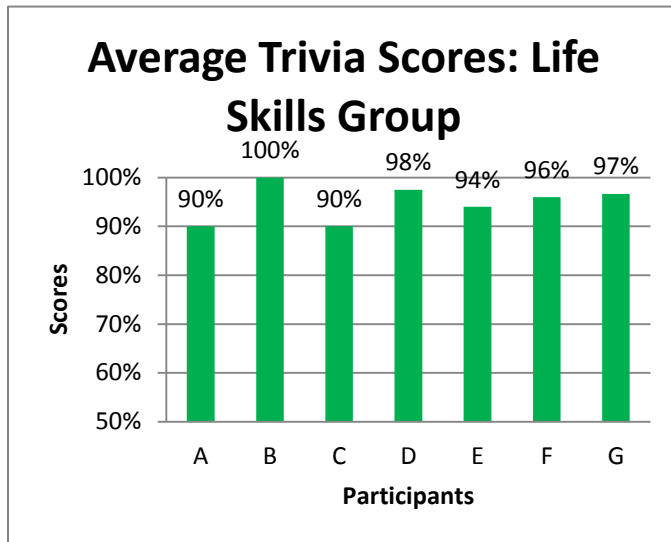
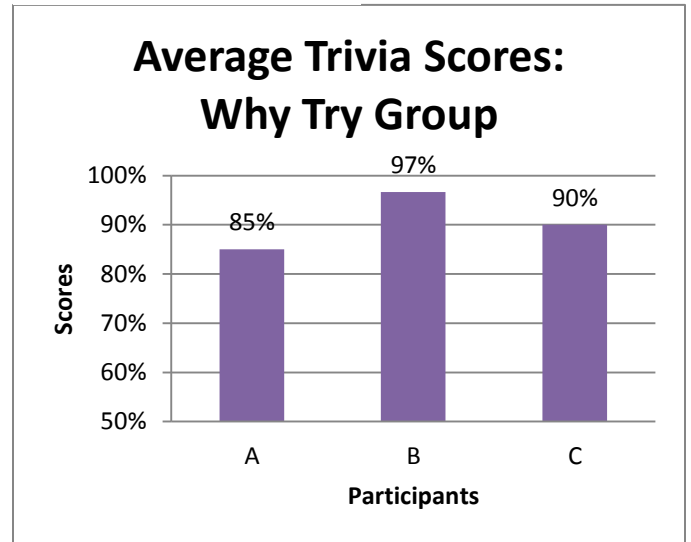


Figure 5



Discussion of Results

Based on the results, the Life Skills curriculum was successful in both raising levels of self-health and allowing the participants to retain at least 80% of the materials taught to them. To reiterate, 71.4% of girls in the Life Skills Group felt better in at least one category of self-health, while only 33% of the girls in the Why Try Group improved; this goes to show that when it comes to addressing pre-teen girls’ self-esteem, the Life Skills curriculum is more beneficial than the Why Try curriculum. This is true also, for topics such as eating healthy and exercising, substance abuse, and refusal skills, as overall the experimental group had higher post-test scores than the control group. However, when it comes to the importance of making good decisions, the Why Try curriculum produced higher results than that of the experimental group, showing that with this topic, the control curriculum is preferable. Finally, regarding the True/False Trivia quizzes, all participants from both groups did very well, with the experimental group averaging 94.9% and the control group averaging 90.6%. However, this percentage point difference of 4.3

goes to show that if one hopes that pre-teen girls will retain most of the information taught to them, then the Life Skills curriculum is slightly more beneficial in accomplishing this.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

In my eyes, as the coordinator for this project, this plan was very successful. Due to the implementation of this new curriculum, several pre-teen girls' lives were positively affected. These girls found tighter friendships among each other, and not only learned life and social skills that they might not have known before, but analyzed their own self-health and improved in several areas of their lives. The laughs and smiles, and positive comments such as "I love Thursdays!" (which was when the experimental group occurred) and "No, I don't want group to be over!" showed the success of the project all on its own.

For the past year, Community Solutions has relied on the Why Try program as a curriculum for many of their services. This is a great curriculum that covers a wide variety of topics; however, with the given success of the Life Skills group, Community Solutions now has another curriculum to choose from, if they wish to do so. This project has given the agency, as well as myself, a whole new perspective on addressing the needs of at-risk pre-teen girls.

Recommendations for the Agency

My number one recommendation to the agency is simple: keep doing what you're doing. This is a wonderful agency that addresses the needs of multiple populations, and they have proven to be successful in this quest. Regarding my project, I would recommend that the agency keeps using the Why Try curriculum, especially for topics related to decision making. I also would recommend that the agency keep the Life Skills curriculum on hand to use for teaching more specific topics related to self-health and knowledge of life and social skills. They can tweak

the curriculum as they wish, but I suggest they use most of the activities, as well as keep the Questions of the Day, Skills of the Week, and the journal and activity folders, as they not only made group fun for the girls, but it created structure and organization throughout the process. As far as managing their interns, Community Solutions did everything right. They should continue to be supportive to their interns, guiding them and educating them the way they did me.

Recommendations for Future Students

To the future students of Collaborative Health and Human Services, I strongly suggest at least considering Community Solutions as an agency to fulfill your junior or senior year internship. This was personally one of my greatest educational experiences because you can only learn so much in the classroom. The staff and supervisors provided sufficient guidance as well as the room to implement my project the way I desired. When it comes to Capstone, stay calm. Stay on top of your assignments, because they are structured in a way to make it manageable to create and implement your project. If you think about your interests, you will end up creating a project that you feel great about, and you will be successful not only based on your professor's terms or your agency's terms, but based on your own terms as well.

CHHS Major Learning Outcomes

There were many CHHS Major Learning Outcomes which were crucial to the completion of my Capstone project, including but not limited to the following:

MLO 3-Cross Cultural Competency

This MLO asks us to demonstrate an understanding of the differences between self and others and be comfortable engaging in a process of relationship-building characterized by mutual respect and sensitivity, while also assessing the needs and capabilities of culturally diverse populations and communicate effectively across cultural groups (CHHS, 2012a). During this

project, I learned much about the cultural variety that is in not only Community Solutions, but among the clients as well. This project required me to facilitate groups for young girls who have low self-esteem and/or a lack of knowledge of life and social skills; this often occurs because they are experiencing some number of risk factors which may vary depending on the cultures and backgrounds they come from. I was required to learn different strategies for meeting clients' needs regardless of their cultural background. I adjusted as necessary to meet their needs; for example, I used a Spanish translator if the parent spoke only Spanish. It is important to keep cultural backgrounds in mind in this profession. You don't help one person more or less because of their culture; rather, you adjust the services to meet the clients' needs.

MLO 11-Public Policy Analysis

This MLO required me to “demonstrate the ability to critically analyze public policy issues and begin to master the skills necessary to identify and define public problems, analyze existing policies, develop alternatives to current policy and recommend alternatives” (CHHS, 2012b). Throughout my internship, by observing, asking questions, and trial and error, I learned many of the policies in Community Solutions. I realized how important it is to document everything, get permission when necessary, and maintain both confidentiality and mandated reporting in order to serve the clients in the best way possible. One of the current informal policies was the extensive use of the Why Try curriculum. For my project, I analyzed this curriculum, determined its efficiency, and proposed an alternative curriculum that could be used instead, depending on the circumstances. Finally, I learned that organizational policies affect not only the agency and the staff, but they also effect the clients. This is one of the main reasons policies are put in place, so that one is able to serve the clients efficiently and effectively.

MLO 12-Statistics and Research Methods

The Statistics and Research Methods MLO asks that we “demonstrate knowledge and application of basic research methodologies and statistical analysis in applied and community-based health and human services practice research” (CHHS, 2012c). During this placement, while evaluating the Why Try curriculum, I collected data from which I was able to determine that it is, overall, effective, but that other curricula could be even more useful depending on the situation. For this project, I used a quantitative design and created both pre- and post-test surveys and True/False Trivia quizzes, which were given to the participants of the Why Try and Life Skills groups, to measure self-esteem and knowledge of life and social skills. I used both Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel in the creation of these surveys and quizzes, as well as in the analysis of the data gathered. I learned it is very important to keep data organized, so as to be able to efficiently analyze it and make accurate realizations about the results. Finally, I learned that doing quality research is important because it is not simply used for a school project, but it can benefit the agency as well as the clients it serves.

University Vision

“California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) is envisioned as a comprehensive state university which values service through high quality education” (CSUMB, 1994). The vision for CSUMB, when it was opened in 1994, was that the school would be committed to “multilingual, multicultural, gender-equitable learning”, and that it would be a “collaborative, intellectual community” that crossed boundaries for “innovative instruction, broadly defined scholarly and creative activity, and coordinated community service.” CSUMB’s education programs would integrate work, learning, service, and reflection, as well as invest in cross-cultural competence. Finally, it was envisioned that CSUMB graduates would “have...the

experience and abilities to contribute to California's high quality work force, the critical thinking abilities to be productive citizens, and the social responsibility and skills to be community builders.”

The goal of my capstone was to empower young girls, and work with them to help them build both their self-esteem and their knowledge of life and social skills. This was a mission to provide necessary services to at-risk girls in order to prevent the possible suffering of consequences that may or may not occur due to the presence of certain factors. By collaboratively working with my professors, mentors, supervisors, and fellow classmates, an opportunity that CSUMB's vision statement promises its students, this project was a great success. This project allowed me to integrate working in the field, learning at the agency and in the classroom, providing effective and useful services to clients, and reflecting on the experience as a whole, all while learning how to service and understand a variety of cultures. This project was a great learning experience that taught me skills which I can contribute to the field, as well as make a difference in peoples' lives and enhance the community in which I live.

Final Thoughts

This internship was one of the greatest learning opportunities I have ever had the pleasure to experience. Community Solutions, as well as the Collaborative Health and Human Services program, will be remembered fondly as I continue to work and gain experience in the field. I would like to thank a variety of people who made an impact on me this past year: Marianne Marafino, my internship supervisor who gave me the chance to come to her with questions, concerns, and ideas throughout the process of my project; Vicki Caballero and Brandy Pereira, my mentors at Community Solutions who guided me through all the technicalities and processes necessary to meet my goals; Adrienne Saxton, my Capstone professor who supported me in both

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my times of need and excitement, shared ideas with me as well as allowed me to bounce ideas off of her, and reassured me during moments of high-stress; and finally, my friends and family, who let me ramble on forever about my project and never got tired of it (or at least never admitted it), and who shared my excitement of my successes and encouraged me when they knew I needed it most. Thank you everyone who helped make this entire experience possible, exciting, and worth putting everything I had into it until the very end.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Multiple Risk Factors for Various Sociodemographic Subgroups

Number and type of risk factors	Total	Sex		Race			Ethnicity	Age			Region				Area type		
		Male	Female	White ¹	Black	Asian		Hispanic	5-9	10-13	14-17	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Cen. City	Balance
Personal																	
0	82.3%	78.8%	85.8%	85.8%	83.6%	80.2%	66.6%	83.9%	82.1%	80.3%	83.3%	85.0%	81.5%	79.8%	78.3%	84.4%	82.4%
1	15.5%	18.1%	12.8%	12.3%	13.8%	18.5%	29.9%	14.6%	15.4%	16.7%	14.3%	13.1%	16.0%	18.2%	19.0%	13.7%	14.9%
2+	2.3%	3.1%	1.4%	1.9%	2.6%	1.3%	3.5%	1.4%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	1.9%	2.6%	2.0%	2.7%	1.9%	2.7%
2	2.2%	3.0%	1.4%	1.9%	2.6%	1.3%	3.4%	1.4%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	1.9%	2.6%	1.9%	2.6%	1.9%	2.6%
3	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Family																	
0	63.6%	63.7%	63.4%	73.5%	32.8%	65.6%	54.3%	64.4%	63.2%	63.0%	64.4%	66.4%	61.0%	63.9%	50.7%	70.0%	65.5%
1	25.1%	25.0%	25.2%	20.3%	41.1%	22.1%	29.4%	23.8%	25.4%	26.4%	23.6%	23.7%	26.8%	25.3%	30.3%	22.6%	23.9%
2+	11.3%	11.4%	11.4%	6.2%	26.2%	12.3%	16.3%	11.8%	11.4%	10.6%	12.0%	10.0%	12.2%	10.8%	19.0%	7.4%	10.6%
2	8.0%	8.1%	8.0%	4.8%	17.9%	8.4%	10.3%	8.2%	8.1%	7.8%	7.9%	7.2%	8.6%	8.0%	12.5%	5.7%	7.6%
3	3.3%	3.1%	3.4%	1.4%	8.2%	3.9%	5.9%	3.6%	3.3%	2.9%	4.0%	2.8%	3.6%	2.8%	6.3%	1.7%	3.0%
4	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Combined																	
0	54.2%	52.4%	56.1%	64.7%	28.4%	54.9%	37.6%	55.7%	53.9%	52.7%	56.1%	58.9%	50.9%	52.8%	41.1%	60.6%	56.6%
1	28.3%	28.8%	27.7%	24.3%	38.1%	26.8%	35.0%	27.4%	28.2%	29.5%	26.3%	25.4%	30.2%	30.0%	32.3%	26.7%	26.4%
2+	17.5%	18.8%	16.2%	11.0%	33.6%	18.3%	27.4%	16.9%	18.0%	17.9%	17.7%	15.8%	18.9%	17.2%	26.6%	12.7%	17.0%
2	11.4%	12.1%	10.6%	7.9%	20.6%	12.0%	15.7%	11.0%	11.6%	11.7%	10.3%	10.7%	12.6%	11.2%	15.8%	9.1%	11.0%
3	4.7%	5.0%	4.4%	2.3%	10.7%	4.8%	8.6%	4.7%	4.9%	4.5%	5.5%	3.9%	4.8%	4.7%	8.3%	2.8%	4.3%
4	1.3%	1.5%	1.1%	0.7%	2.0%	1.3%	2.8%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%	2.2%	0.7%	1.5%
5	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%

Source: Kominski, R., Jamieson, A., & Martinez, G. (2001). *At risk conditions of U.S. school-age children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census: Population Division. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0052/twps0052.html>

Appendix B: Levels of Risk for Children, 1999

(Numbers in thousands)

Risk Factors	Children 5-17																			
	Total		Sex				Race				Ethnicity		Age							
	Number	Percent	Male	Female	White ¹	Black	API	Hispanic	5-9	10-13	14-17									
Total children	52,701	100.0%	27,006	51.2%	25,695	48.8%	33,570	63.7%	8,518	16.2%	2,358	4.5%	8,024	15.2%	20,535	39.0%	16,148	30.6%	16,018	30.4%
Disability	48,690	92.4%	24,403	90.4%	24,286	94.5%	30,769	91.7%	7,926	93.1%	2,274	96.4%	7,539	94.0%	19,100	93.0%	14,846	91.9%	14,744	92.0%
No disability	4,011	7.6%	2,603	9.6%	1,409	5.5%	2,801	8.3%	593	7.0%	84	3.6%	484	6.0%	1,435	7.0%	1,302	8.1%	1,274	8.0%
At least one disability	3,293	6.2%	2,153	8.0%	1,141	4.4%	2,334	7.0%	472	5.5%	67	2.8%	386	4.8%	1,161	5.7%	1,077	6.7%	1,055	6.6%
One disability	718	1.4%	450	1.7%	268	1.0%	467	1.4%	121	1.4%	17	0.7%	98	1.2%	275	1.3%	225	1.4%	219	1.4%
More than one disability																				
Retained²																				
Never retained	44,744	91.3%	22,380	89.8%	22,364	94.2%	28,948	92.7%	6,955	88.3%	2,060	96.1%	6,600	91.5%	15,744	95.4%	14,812	91.7%	14,189	88.6%
Retained at least once	3,920	8.1%	2,546	10.2%	1,374	5.8%	2,275	7.3%	923	11.7%	83	3.9%	612	8.5%	770	4.7%	1,336	8.3%	1,829	11.4%
Retained once	3,669	7.5%	2,363	9.5%	1,306	5.5%	2,129	6.8%	855	10.9%	83	3.9%	576	8.0%	749	4.5%	1,282	7.9%	1,638	10.2%
Retained more than once	251	0.5%	183	0.7%	68	0.3%	146	0.5%	68	0.9%	0	0.0%	36	0.5%	6	0.0%	53	0.3%	192	1.2%
Language ability for those who speak language other than English																				
Speaks English "very well" or does not speak language other than English	50,071	95.0%	25,596	94.8%	24,475	95.3%	33,230	99.0%	8,410	98.7%	2,030	86.1%	6,149	76.6%	19,127	93.1%	15,476	95.8%	15,467	96.6%
Speaks English less than "very well"	2,630	5.0%	1,410	5.2%	1,220	4.7%	340	1.0%	108	1.3%	328	13.9%	1,875	23.4%	1,408	6.9%	672	4.2%	551	3.4%

Risk Factors	Region								Area type					
	Northeast		Midwest		South		West		Central City		Balance		Nonmetro	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total children	9,981	18.9%	12,357	23.5%	18,047	34.2%	12,316	23.4%	15,221	28.9%	27,421	52.0%	10,059	19.1%
Disability	9,201	92.2%	11,390	92.2%	16,640	92.2%	11,458	93.0%	14,109	92.7%	25,372	92.5%	9,209	91.5%
No disability	780	7.8%	968	7.8%	1,406	7.8%	857	7.0%	1,111	7.3%	2,050	7.5%	850	8.5%
At least one disability	656	6.6%	803	6.5%	1,157	6.4%	678	5.5%	897	5.9%	1,631	6.2%	706	7.0%
One disability	124	1.2%	165	1.3%	250	1.4%	179	1.5%	215	1.4%	359	1.3%	144	1.4%
More than one disability														
Retained²														
Never retained	8,560	92.5%	10,610	92.4%	14,929	89.4%	10,645	94.7%	12,648	90.6%	23,649	93.4%	8,448	90.0%
Retained at least once	695	7.5%	877	7.6%	1,757	10.5%	591	5.3%	1,304	9.4%	1,681	6.6%	935	10.0%
Retained once	656	7.1%	842	7.3%	1,601	9.6%	570	5.1%	1,238	8.9%	1,580	6.2%	851	9.1%
Retained more than once	39	0.4%	35	0.3%	156	0.9%	21	0.2%	66	0.5%	101	0.4%	84	0.9%
Language ability for those who speak language other than English														
Speaks English "very well"	9,546	95.6%	12,104	98.0%	17,394	96.4%	11,027	89.5%	13,921	91.5%	26,344	96.1%	9,805	97.5%
Speaks English less than "very well"	435	4.4%	253	2.0%	653	3.6%	1,289	10.5%	1,300	8.5%	1,077	3.9%	254	2.5%

Source: Kominski, R., Jamieson, A., & Martinez, G. (2001). *At risk conditions of U.S. school-age children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census: Population Division. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0052/twps0052.html>

Appendix C: Life Skills Curriculum

Week 1

Topic: Introduction to Group

Goal: The group will review group rules, expectations and outline for the next six weeks.

Materials:

- Journals (one per girl)
- Folders with 3 prongs (one per girl)
- Binder paper
- Printer paper (White and colored. Not construction paper.)
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Camera
- Pencils/Pens

Check In (40 minutes)

- Introduce Facilitator
 - Mandated Reporter
- Introduction of group members
- Ice breaker
 - Two Truths, One Lie
- Discuss rules and group expectations
- Explain Journals and Activity Folders
- Take Pictures for Journal
- Decorate Journals and review Activity Folder

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What does it mean to you to be healthy?
- Write in Journals

Closure (10 minutes)

- Check out
- Invite girls to continue writing in and decorating their journals (optional: they can share their thoughts next week in group).

Week 2

Topic: Health and Its Challenges: A Teens Point of View

Goal: Group will discuss basic teen health questions and concerns while creating a positive opportunity to use new learned skills at home, school and in the community.

Materials:

- Poster size picture of My Plate image
- Markers
- Variety of coupon magazines
- Grocery list (created by facilitator)
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules
-

Question of the Day (10 minutes)

- What does it mean to you to be healthy?
 - Journal sharing (write and/or discuss)
 - Facilitators discuss additional information and points

Activity 1: My Plate Challenge (10 minutes)

- List food items that belong in each category on My Plate.
- Discuss what other food items go on My Plate.

Activity 2: Coupon Scavenger Hunt (10 minutes)

- Goal of the game is to work together to find the best cost value and quality from different stores on a limited budget.
- Group may utilize coupons and new paper adds to work on budget.
- Price match items with coupons from different stores.

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 15 statements about nutrition and self care.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5-10 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Practice one healthy habit (optional: share next week).

Question(s) of the Day: How can drugs hurt your body, mind, and future? What if your friend said “but everyone does it”?

Week 3

Topic: Substance Abuse

Goal: Group will discuss the physical and mental effects of tobacco, marijuana and alcohol abuse. Group will learn to effectively use refusal skills and decision making skills to deal with negative peer pressure and influences.

Materials:

- Copies of Reality Ride image
- Dry erase board with markers
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- How can drugs hurt your body, mind, and future? What if your friend said “but everyone does it”?
 - Journal sharing (write and/or discuss)
 - Facilitators discuss additional information and points

Activity 1: Matching Game (10 minutes)

- Write five substances and their effects on the board, without saying which substance causes which effect.
- Have group match the effect to the substance definition

Activity 2: Reality Ride (15 minutes)

- Discuss the Fast and Easy ride and the Harder but Worth It ride as it relates to substance abuse and decision making (Decision Skill).
- Ask group to share examples of friends they know who have gotten into trouble because of poor decisions and substance abuse
- Introduce the four steps of the Refusal Skills

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 15 statements about substance abuse.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Tell three people what you have learned about the dangers of substance abuse.

Question(s) of the Day: What do you think about teen violence and peer pressure? How do teens deal with these types of issues today?

Week 4

Topic: Dealing with Peer Pressure and Strong Relationship Influences in an Assertive Positive Way

Goal: Group will identify negative/dangerous elements when dealing with peer pressure/relationships.

Materials:

- Copies of Climbing Out image
- Teen Power Wheel
- Pictures (magazines, videogames, movies, etc.)
- Colored Pencils
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz
- Printer paper

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What do you think about teen violence and peer pressure? How do teens deal with these types of issues today?
 - Journal sharing (write and/or discuss)
 - Facilitators discuss additional information and points

Activity 1: Climbing Out (10 minutes)

- Discuss how peer pressure can have an effect decision making: What are some negative consequences of peer pressure? What can you do to ensure that you make the best decision for yourself? Who wants you to make the right decisions? Who could you go to for help when you need it?

Activity 2: Teen Violence and the Media (10 minutes)

- Discuss how media impacts teen violence in schools and the community.
- Discuss video games, movies, magazine pictures, and media's perception of women.
- Introduce and explain Teen Power Wheel

Activity 3: Goal Staircase (15 minutes)

- Using the Goal Staircase, discuss one of your goals.
- On each stair, write a step that is necessary to reach this ultimate goal
- Facilitator reads off a list of possible life decisions that may come their way. Discuss with group how these could affect their staircase.

Activity 4: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 15 statements about peer pressure and teen violence.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Check out

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- Skill of the Week: Interview parent or guardian about their experience with peer pressure and violence.

Question(s) of the Day: What is *your* Hula Hoop?

Week 5

Topic: Setting Boundaries

Goal: Group will learn basic skills in setting personal boundaries and being able to say “no” in an assertive manner using refusal skills.

Materials:

- 9 paper slips with “peer pressure” themed situations
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz
- Hula Hoops (one for each girl)
- Camera

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What is *your* Hula Hoop?
 - Journal sharing (write and/or discuss)
 - Facilitators discuss additional information and points

Activity 1: Time to Share (10 minutes)

- Facilitator asks the girls to share one or more times that they have been asked or told to do something they didn’t feel good about, and share how they handled it.
- Share a story that happened to a friend or family member, or they can give an example.
- Review and practice refusal skills.

Activity 2: Role Play-Practice Saying “No” (15 minutes)

- Facilitator will give each girl 3 “peer pressure” themed situations.
- Role play the situations.
- Practice refusal skills.

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 15 statements about setting boundaries.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (10 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Using your Hula Hoop, explain to one person of your choice what it means to have your personal boundary.
- Offer choices: Go 30 minutes longer on 6th week? Or have a 7th week for a party? Majority rules. (optional, depending on group location/situation)
- Take Pictures for Journal

Question(s) of the Day: What are two really good things about yourself? If I were the queen of the world, I would change...

Week 6

Topic: Self-Esteem Building/Hidden Dangers on the Internet

Goal #1: To teach strategies for building strong self-esteem in the areas of self-worth and healthy relationships.

Goal #2: To be aware of potential dangers of the internet in the areas of social networking sites (Facebook) and cyber-bullying.

Materials:

- Copies of Tearing Off Labels image
- Printer paper with markers/colored pencils
- 3 cute guy photos (no portrait shots)
- Empty soup cans
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What are two really good things about yourself? If I were the queen of the world, I would change...
 - Journal sharing (write and/or discuss)
 - Facilitators discuss additional information and points

Activity 1: Tearing Off Labels (15 minutes)

- Discuss current labels that the girls have for themselves, or that others have for them. How do they feel about these labels? Why?
- Create new labels for themselves with paper and markers. Who are they now? Who do they want to be?
- Tape new positive labels to cans for girls to take home.

Activity 2: Mystery Person Activity (10 minutes)

- Each member will receive a photo of a cute guy (photos brought by facilitator).
- Members write positive, great things about the cute guy that you would want others to believe are true.
- Facilitator then gives “real description” of the person.
- Discuss reactions.

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 15 statements about building self-esteem and hidden dangers on the internet.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5-30 minutes)

- EITHER:

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- Review materials from past 6 weeks through journal writing, poster making, sharing, etc.
- What was your favorite lesson of the group? How can this group be improved in your opinion?
- Hand out pictures for journal
- Answer questions and concerns
- Skill of the Week: Practice one skill building strategy.
- Check out
- Goodbyes
- OR:
 - Check out.
 - Skill of the Week: Practice one skill building strategy.
 - Question(s) of the Day: What do you want to do for a party? What was your favorite lesson of the group? How can this group be improved in your opinion?

Appendix D: Why Try Curriculum

Week 1

Topic: Introduction to Group

Goal: The group will review group rules, expectations and outline for the next six weeks.

Materials:

- Folders with 3 prongs (one per girl)
- Binder paper
- Printer paper (White and colored. Not construction paper.)
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Pencils/Pens

Check In (40 minutes)

- Introduce Facilitator
 - Mandated Reporter
- Introduction of group members
- Ice breaker
 - Two Truths, One Lie
- Discuss rules and group expectations
- Explain Activity Folders
- Decorate and review Activity Folder

Closure (10 minutes)

- Check out

Week 2

Topic: Health and Its Challenges: A Teens Point of View

Goal: Group will discuss basic teen health questions and concerns while creating a positive opportunity to use new learned skills at home, school and in the community.

Materials:

- Copies of Reality Ride Image
- Dry erase board with markers
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day (10 minutes)

- What does it mean to you to be healthy?
 - Sharing and discussion
 - Discuss additional information

Activity 1: Introduce Reality Ride (10 minutes)

- Discuss Easy-Fast ride versus Harder-But-Worth-It ride
- Ask girls “If they could change any of their eating/exercise habits, what would it be?”

Activity 2: Board Work (15 minutes)

- In various columns, girls write:
 - Challenges (home, school, peers)
 - Things that get them into “trouble”
 - Consequences of the “Crash”
 - People who can support them
 - Rewards of reaching your health goals

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 10 statements about healthy eating and exercise.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5-10 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Practice one healthy habit (optional: share next week).

Week 3

Topic: Substance Abuse

Goal: Group will discuss the physical and mental effects of tobacco, marijuana and alcohol abuse. Group will learn to effectively use refusal skills and decision making skills to deal with negative peer pressure and influences.

Materials:

- Copies of Reality Ride image
- Dry erase board with markers
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (15 minutes)

- How can drugs hurt your body, mind, and future? What if your friend said “but everyone does it”?
 - Sharing and discussion
 - Girls write as many substances that they know of on the board
 - Discuss tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol abuse

Activity 1: Review Reality Ride (10 minutes)

- Discuss the Fast and Easy ride and the Harder but Worth It ride as it relates to substance abuse and decision making (Decision Skill).

Activity 2: Refusal Skills (10 minutes)

- Introduce Refusal Skills

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 10 statements about substance abuse.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Tell three people what you have learned about the dangers of substance abuse (optional: share next week).

Week 4

Topic: Dealing with Peer Pressure and Strong Relationship Influences in an Assertive Positive Way

Goal: Group will identify negative/dangerous elements when dealing with peer pressure/relationships.

Materials:

- Copies of Climbing Out image
- Teen Power Wheel
- Colored Pencils
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz
- Printer paper

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What do you think about teen violence and peer pressure? How do teens deal with these types of issues today?
 - Sharing and discussion
 - Discuss additional information

Activity 1: Climbing Out (15 minutes)

- Discuss how peer pressure can have an effect decision making: What are some negative consequences of peer pressure? What can you do to ensure that you make the best decision for yourself? Who wants you to make the right decisions? Who could you go to for help when you need it?

Activity 2: Teen Power Wheel (10 minutes)

- Introduce and explain Teen Power Wheel

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 10 statements about peer pressure and teen violence.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Interview parent or guardian about their experience with peer pressure and violence (optional: share next week).

Week 5

Topic: Setting Boundaries

Goal: Group will learn basic skills in setting personal boundaries and being able to say “no” in an assertive manner using refusal skills.

Materials:

- 9 paper slips with “peer pressure” themed situations
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz
- Hula Hoops (one for each girl)
- Camera

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What is *your* Hula Hoop?
 - Sharing and discussion
 - Discuss additional information and how boundaries relate to “Climbing Out” image

Activity 1: Time to Share (10 minutes)

- Facilitator asks the girls to share one or more times that they have been asked or told to do something they didn’t feel good about, and share how they handled it.
- Share a story that happened to a friend or family member, or they can give an example.
- Review refusal skills.

Activity 2: Role Play-Practice Saying “No” (15 minutes)

- Facilitator will give each girl 3 “peer pressure” themed situations.
- Role play the situations.
- Practice refusal skills.

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 10 statements about setting boundaries.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5 minutes)

- Check out
- Skill of the Week: Using your Hula Hoop, explain to one person of your choice what it means to have your personal boundary.

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Week 6

Topic: Self-Esteem Building/Hidden Dangers on the Internet

Goal #1: To teach strategies for building strong self-esteem in the areas of self-worth and healthy relationships.

Goal #2: To be aware of potential dangers of the internet in the areas of social networking sites (Facebook) and cyber-bullying.

Materials:

- Copies of Tearing Off Labels image
- Printer paper with markers/colored pencils
- 3 cute guy photos (no portrait shots)
- Empty soup cans
- Pencils/Pens
- True/False Trivia Quiz

Check In (5-10 minutes)

- Quick Check In/Rules

Question of the Day: (10 minutes)

- What are two really good things about yourself? If I were the queen of the world, I would change...
 - Sharing and discussion
 - Discuss additional information

Activity 1: Tearing Off Labels (15 minutes)

- Discuss current labels that the girls have for themselves, or that others have for them. How do they feel about these labels? Why?
- Create new labels for themselves with paper and markers. Who are they now? Who do they want to be?
- Tape new positive labels to cans for girls to take home.

Activity 2: Mystery Person Activity (10 minutes)

- Each member will receive a photo of a cute guy (photos brought by facilitator).
- Members write positive, great things about the cute guy that you would want others to believe are true.
- Facilitator then gives “real description” of the person.
- Discuss reactions.

Activity 3: True/False Trivia (10 minutes)

- Read off 10 statements about building self-esteem and hidden dangers on the internet.
- Winner is individual with most points.

Closure (5-30 minutes)

- EITHER:
 - Check out.

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- What was your favorite lesson of the group? How can this group be improved in your opinion?
- Answer questions and concerns
- Check out
- Goodbyes
- Skill of the Week: Practice one skill building strategy.

Appendix E: Pre/Post Test

Self-Health and Life Skills Survey

In order to see if this group helps you, we need *you* to help *us*! Please answer the questions honestly, so that we are able to help you the best way we can. Thank you!

1. On a scale of 1-5, rank how you feel about ***yourself***.



2. On a scale of 1-5, rank how you feel about ***school***.



3. On a scale of 1-5, rank how you feel about ***family***.



4. On a scale of 1-5, rank how you feel about ***friends/peers***.



5. On a scale of 1-5, rank how you feel about ***life***.



6. On a scale of 1-5, rank how important it is to ***exercise and eat healthy.***

5. Very Important	4. Fairly Important	3. Neutral/I Don't Know	2. A Little Important	1. Not Important
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7. On a scale of 1-5, rank how important it is to ***refuse tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol.***

5. Very Important	4. Fairly Important	3. Neutral/I Don't Know	2. A Little Important	1. Not Important
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8. On a scale of 1-5, rank how it is for you to ***make decisions.***

5. Very Easy	4. Somewhat Easy	3. Neutral/I Don't Know	2. Somewhat Hard	1. Very Hard
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9. On a scale of 1-5, rank how it is for you to ***say no.***

5. Very Easy	4. Somewhat Easy	3. Neutral/I Don't Know	2. Somewhat Hard	1. Very Hard
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10. On a scale of 1-5, rank how ***public or private you are on Facebook.***

5. Only Your Friends Can See Your Facebook	4. Your Facebook is Mostly Private	3. You Don't Have a Facebook	2. Your Facebook is A Little Private	1. Anyone Can See Your Facebook
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Appendix F: Week 2 Quiz

True/False: Nutrition and Self Care

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Fruits or veggies should fill half of your plate. | T | F |
| 2. Basketball, swimming, walking, and dancing are examples of physical activities. | T | F |
| 3. Corn, peas, green beans, and carrots are examples of fruits. | T | F |
| 4. Exercise has to be hard work that isn't very enjoyable or fun. | T | F |
| 5. Bread is the only food that can give you the grains that you need. | T | F |
| 6. Nuts and seeds are foods with protein. | T | F |
| 7. Being active every day can be fun and can give you more energy. | T | F |
| 8. My Plate shows about how much fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy you should eat to have the best meal. | T | F |
| 9. Foods with dairy can include milk, cheese, and yogurt. | T | F |
| 10. Foods such as candy, soda, chips, and fast food are treats that you can eat once in awhile. | T | F |

Appendix G: Week 3 Quiz

True/False: Substance Abuse

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Marijuana can affect your memory, attention, decision making abilities, language, and functioning skills. | T | F |
| 2. Alcohol can damage the brain and liver. | T | F |
| 3. Smoking tobacco can cause heart disease, lung cancer, and tooth loss. | T | F |
| 4. Tobacco and alcohol are not addictive substances. | T | F |
| 5. Marijuana can be eaten in certain foods or it can be smoked. | T | F |
| 6. You cannot die from alcohol poisoning. | T | F |
| 7. Tobacco and alcohol are considered gateway drugs. | T | F |
| 8. Marijuana can change the way the brain works, and can damage your short-term memory. | T | F |
| 9. Binge drinking is reported as early as 10 th grade. | T | F |
| 10. 1 out of every 3 kids that try smoking becomes regular, daily smokers before leaving high school. | T | F |

Appendix H: Week 4 Quiz

True/False: Peer Pressure and Teen Violence

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Peer pressure can be positive or negative. | T | F |
| 2. Peer pressure, emotional abuse, intimidation, and isolation are different forms of teen power and control. | T | F |
| 3. It is important to try to look and act like the girls and women do in movies, magazines, video games, TV shows, etc. | T | F |
| 4. If you are being pressured into doing something, it is better to handle it yourself and to not ask for help. | T | F |
| 5. Sometimes the best thing to do in a peer pressure situation is to just walk away. | T | F |
| 6. If you need help or advice, you can talk to parents, other family members, teachers, school counselors, and other people you trust. | T | F |
| 7. It can help to have one friend with you who is also willing to say “no”. Sometimes, it is also important to be that friend to someone else. | T | F |
| 8. When completing steps to reach a goal in life, sometimes peer pressure can create obstacles which make it more difficult to reach that goal. | T | F |
| 9. Teens try to have power and control over others only by using physical violence. | T | F |
| 10. It is important to know the difference between what happens in real life and what happens on TV, in magazines, in movies, etc. | T | F |

Appendix I: Week 5 Quiz

True/False: Setting Boundaries

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. It is good to know and enforce your personal boundaries. | T | F |
| 2. If someone is in your personal space and making you uncomfortable, it is okay to move or ask them to please back up a little bit. | T | F |
| 3. If someone asks you to do something you don't want to do, it is not okay to just change the subject of the conversation. | T | F |
| 4. If a friend asks you to do something you don't want to do, it is possible to say "no" and still be friends with them. | T | F |
| 5. Having boundaries can be very important in friendships and relationships. | T | F |
| 6. While it <i>is</i> important for people to respect your personal boundaries, it is <i>not</i> important for you to respect other people's boundaries. | T | F |
| 7. Boundaries don't have to be a physical distance between you and another person. | T | F |
| 8. You can set boundaries anytime in a friendship or relationship: beginning, middle, or end. | T | F |
| 9. Setting boundaries can be difficult. | T | F |
| 10. Healthy boundaries are considered to be firm, but flexible. | T | F |

Appendix J: Week 6 Quiz

True/False: Hidden Dangers on the Internet and Self-Esteem

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. People on the internet are always telling the truth about who they are. | T | F |
| 2. It is important to have your own positive labels about yourself. | T | F |
| 3. You should always try to be the labels that your peers have set for you. | T | F |
| 4. The internet is useful, but it can also be dangerous if you are not aware. | T | F |
| 5. Facebook and other social networking sites are always safe for anyone who uses it. | T | F |
| 6. Cyberbullying (when people bully through the internet) hardly ever happens. | T | F |
| 7. It is possible to protect yourself on the internet by using privacy settings and by not putting personal information online. | T | F |
| 8. Just because a bully might say you're not pretty, smart, cool, etc., it does <i>not</i> mean that it is true. | T | F |
| 9. You should always think about what you post online, including pictures, status updates, personal information, blogs, etc. | T | F |
| 10. You can be anybody you want to be. | T | F |

Appendix K: Informed Consent Example

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are pleased to inform you that your child has been given the opportunity to participate in a six week Life Skills workshop for pre-teen girls. This workshop is a free service offered by Community Solutions at Jackson Elementary School. This group will meet every week starting _____, 2012 at _____.

This workshop is designed to help your child learn some of the skills and information necessary when going through the oftentimes rough period of becoming a teenager and young woman. During the group meetings, your child will learn how to confront challenges, avoid negative peer pressure, and gain self-respect and self-confidence in positive, constructive ways. Some of the topics also included are health and hygiene, substance abuse, setting boundaries, and dangers of the internet. This workshop will combine traditional classroom methods with an interactive, peer-to-peer based environment.

In order to measure the success of this workshop, your child will answer a very short survey asking about their feelings and attitudes regarding different aspects of their life. The name of your child will not be shared, and the data gathered from the answers will only be used for assessment and educational purposes. In order to respect your privacy, we would like to first ask your permission before using the data gathered from the survey your child filled out.

Please check the appropriate box, sign and detach the form on the next page, and have this form returned by the next group meeting.

If you have any further questions, please contact Sarah Walton at (408) 846-4778.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Walton, B.A. Intern
Restorative Justice Project
Direct Referral Program

Heather Valentine
Assistant Program Director
Youth Support Services

- I give permission for Community Solutions to gather data regarding my child's participation in the Life Skills Group. The data will consist of information that will assist in improving the effectiveness of the Life Skills Group.
- I do not give permission for Community Solutions to gather data regarding my child's participation in the Life Skills Group. The data will consist of information that will assist in improving the effectiveness of the Life Skills Group.

Parent/Guardian Print: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Additional Comments: _____
