

Learning Circle



Value the individual strengths and uniqueness of each youth.

Actively engage youth in developing life skills that will prepare them for successful adulthood.

Preparation for Adulthood: Supervising for Success

Learning Circle: Value the individual strengths and uniqueness of each youth. Actively engage youth in developing life skills that will prepare them for successful adulthood.

Agenda

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

9:30 am	Welcome and Overview of Day
9:45 am	Introduction to Learning Circle and Review of Past Action Plans
10:00 am	Focus Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What should a “prepared young person” look like when they leave foster care? What are the challenges in supervising staff towards help young people acquire life skills?▪ In your supervision, how do you encourage staff to focus on a strengths-based perspective? What tools or strategies do you use?
10:45 am	Break
11:00 am	Youth Video and Discussion
11:30 pm	Discussion of strengths-based practice
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Presentation of strength-based tools
1:45 pm	Discussion of Balanced Assessment as a Preparation Strategy
2:30 pm	Using Balanced Assessment Tools in Supervision
3:15 pm	Final Activity and Debrief
4:00 pm	Creating Action Plans

Learning Circle: Value the individual strengths and uniqueness of each youth.

Supervisory Competencies

- Knows and understands that young people possess a multitude of strengths, talents, hopes and dreams.
- Knows and understands that youth possess a 'culture' that is unique to young people themselves.
- Knows and understands that exposure to a wide range of experiences and opportunities is critical to fostering a youth's sense of positive future.
- Knows how to apply the philosophy and practice of youth development to promoting the health and well being of youth.
- Knows how to support youth in developing an understanding of their personal history and a sense of cultural identity.
- Can and is able to utilize strengths-based practice to help youth identify their interests, goals and direction for the future

Guiding Principles:

- A wide range of opportunities and experiences that facilitate discussion and reflection around ethical values, personal interests, strengths and accomplishments.
- Youth explore and value their diverse abilities, skills, interests and cultural background.
- Opportunities and experiences are provided to foster youths' positive sense of purpose and view of the future.
- Youth are recognized for both their participation and achievement.

Practices:

- Use strengths-based materials that help youth discover their abilities, skills and interests.
- Create life books which help youth reflect on their placement history and cultural background.
- Create opportunities for youth to be involved in a wide range of experiences and activities that promote their positive development.
- Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of young people.

Actively engage youth in developing life skills that will prepare them for successful adulthood.

Supervisory Competencies

- Knows and understands that the development of life skills is ongoing and occurs throughout the lifespan.
- Knows and understands that young people must play a central role in the development of their life skills goals.
- Knows and understands how to meaningfully engage young people in the acquisition of skills that will prepare them for successful and productive adulthood.
- Knows how to provide both formal and informal learning opportunities for young people that support life skills preparation.

Guiding Principles:

- Youth identify, develop, and practice life skills through “real world” experiences.
- Development of a holistic approach to life skill assessment.
- Youth have opportunities to make decisions and take responsibility for their choices.
- Youth receive support from caring adults throughout the skill-building process.
- Youth set challenging yet realistic goals.
- Youth recognize and celebrate their skills and accomplishments within their own definition of success and mastery.

Practices:

- Create experiences with youth that apply knowledge and skills learned in “real world” situations.
- Provide both formal and informal learning opportunities for young people using a competency-based approach to life skills preparation.
- Allow youth adequate time to talk about and reflect on the experience.
- Provide mentoring programs and service learning opportunities.
- Develop life skill portfolios that have evidence of skill acquisition as part of the transition plan

Focus Questions:

What should a “prepared young person” look like when they leave foster care? What are the challenges in supervising staff towards help young people acquire life skills?

In your supervision, how do you encourage staff to focus on a strengths-based perspective? What tools or strategies do you use?

Strengths Can Be

- **Skills** (learned and acquired competencies, for example driving a care, caring for young children, speaking Spanish, doing budgets)
- **Talents** (innate or “natural” competencies, for example, sports, art, music, juggling and cooking)
- **Personal virtues and traits** (for example, insight, patience, self-discipline, a capacity for relationships, and a sense of humor)
- **Interpersonal skills** (for example, comforting the anxious, mediating conflict, and listening/validating)
- **Cultural knowledge and lore** (for example, healing ceremonies and rituals, stories of cultural perseverance, and the modeling of cultural heroes)
- **Family stories and narratives** (for example, overcoming obstacles, migration and settlement, falls from grace and subsequent redemption, important family members, and instructive family lore)
- **Knowledge gained from struggling against adversity** (for example, how one came to survive and surmount barriers and how one developed and maintained faith and hope)
- **Spirituality and faith** (for example, a transcendent system of meaning to rely on and a declaration of purpose beyond the self)
- **Hope and dreams** (for example, personal, familial, social and occupational goals and vision, and positive expectation about a better future) Dennis Saleebey (2001)

Center for Strengths Based Strategies
From Michael Clark's Training on Strength-based Practice
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STRENGTHS-BASED ASSESSMENT FOR YOUTH

The following conversational questions may generate a more detailed understanding of the areas in the youth's personal life that hold meaning and value from their perspective. The idea is to weave these questions into the conversation. The form may then be shared with him/her and they are asked to take it with them and write the information on the form. This individualized information may then provide direction for the outcomes of the helping process.

Participant_____ Staff_____

Date_____

1. What are the things you like to do for fun?
2. What are you really good at?
3. Where do you like to spend time, and why do you like it there?
4. Who do you like to spend time with? Why do you like to spend time with them?
5. What are the things that are yours that are really important to you?
6. What things would you really like to have that you do not have now?
7. Who would you really like to meet in person? What do you admire about this person?
8. If you had one wish to change something about your life, what would you wish for?
9. What is your favorite subject in school? Why do you like this subject?

10. Who is your favorite teacher? Why do you like him/her?
11. Who is your best friend at school? Why do you both get along so well?
12. What kinds of things make you angry? What do you do when you get angry?
13. What do you like about going to school? What don't you like about going to school?
14. When you "day dream" what do you think about?
15. What would you like to have as a job when you grow up? What do you think about going to college?
16. What do you like best about yourself? What would you like to change about yourself?
17. What kinds of things do you do to take care of your health?
18. Do you like sports? What is your favorite sport? Do you like to play this sport or watch?
19. What do you think about taking drugs? Drinking alcohol? Smoking?
20. If you had one wish to make something happen in your life, what would you wish for?

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Name _____

Date Completed _____

An Asset Checklist

Many people find it helpful to use a simple checklist to reflect on their asset experience. **NOTE: This checklist is not intended nor appropriate as scientific or accurate measurement of developmental assets.**



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- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> I receive high levels of love and support from family members. | <input type="radio"/> I want to do well in school. |
| <input type="radio"/> I can go to my parent(s) or guardian(s) for advice and support and have frequent in-depth conversations with them. | <input type="radio"/> I am actively engaged in learning. |
| <input type="radio"/> I know some non parent adults I can go to for advice and support. | <input type="radio"/> I do an hour or more of homework each school day. |
| <input type="radio"/> My neighbors encourage and support me. | <input type="radio"/> I care about my school. |
| <input type="radio"/> My school provides a caring, encouraging environment. | <input type="radio"/> I read for pleasure three or more hours each week. |
| <input type="radio"/> My parent(s) or guardian(s) help me succeed in school. | <input type="radio"/> I believe it is really important to help other people. |
| <input type="radio"/> I feel valued by adults in my community. | <input type="radio"/> I want to help promote equality and reduce world poverty and hunger. |
| <input type="radio"/> I am given useful roles in my community. | <input type="radio"/> I can stand up for what I believe. |
| <input type="radio"/> I serve in the community one hour or more each week. | <input type="radio"/> I tell the truth even when it is not easy. |
| <input type="radio"/> I feel safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. | <input type="radio"/> I can accept and take personal responsibility. |
| <input type="radio"/> My family sets standards for appropriate conduct and monitors my whereabouts. | <input type="radio"/> I believe it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. |
| <input type="radio"/> My school has clear rules and consequences for behavior. | <input type="radio"/> I am good at planning ahead and making decisions. |
| <input type="radio"/> Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring my behavior. | <input type="radio"/> I am good at making and keeping friends. |
| <input type="radio"/> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. | <input type="radio"/> I know and am comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. |
| <input type="radio"/> My best friends model responsible behavior. | <input type="radio"/> I can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. |
| <input type="radio"/> My parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers encourage me to do well. | <input type="radio"/> I try to resolve conflict nonviolently. |
| <input type="radio"/> I spend three hours or more each week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. | <input type="radio"/> I believe I have control over many things that happen to me. |
| <input type="radio"/> I spend three hours or more each week in school or community sports, clubs, or organizations. | <input type="radio"/> I feel good about myself. |
| <input type="radio"/> I spend one hour or more each week in religious services or participating in spiritual activities. | <input type="radio"/> I believe my life has a purpose. |
| <input type="radio"/> I go out with my friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights each week. | <input type="radio"/> I am optimistic about my future. |

Balanced Life Skill Assessment

Balanced Life Skill Assessment uses three different assessment strategies:

- **Traditional Life Skill Assessment** – The field has produced both formal and informal assessments that focus specifically on life skills. These assessments provide initial information to guide instruction and develop rapport.
 - ❖ Life skills strengths/needs assessment
 - ❖ Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment
- **Portfolio Assessment** – focuses on the growth and development of a young person’s potential. The Life Skills Guidebook/Learning Plan provides a set of competencies/learning goals and expectations which are used to guide both individual and group life skill instruction. Portfolio items can be developed to match certain competencies. Portfolio development includes collecting, selecting and reflecting on life skill learning. It gives youth opportunities to take some control of assessment and show what they have learned. For example, in some programs youth are videotaped conducting job interviews and then reflect on their progress in developing interviewing skills by using an interviewing checklist. The videotape and interviewing checklist become part of the youth’s portfolio.
- **Performance Assessment** - focuses on the direct observation of a youth’s performance. The competencies/learning goals and expectations provide predetermined indicators of achievement. Performance assessment will allow youth to know and do what have learned. It can also provide the agency with historical data on the youth’s life skill overall life skill development.

Authentic Life Skills Assessment

What It Is

What It Gets You

OBSERVATION

Youth watching

Information from key contacts

Interviews

Portrait of a young persons strengths and needs

Conferences

Different perspectives on intervention strategies

DOCUMENTATION

Notetaking

Progress on life skills

Checklists

instruction

Running Records

Validation of instruction

Journals

Connections

Portfolios

Patterns

Growth and change

Areas for further instruction

EVALUATION

Narrative Data

Information on teaching

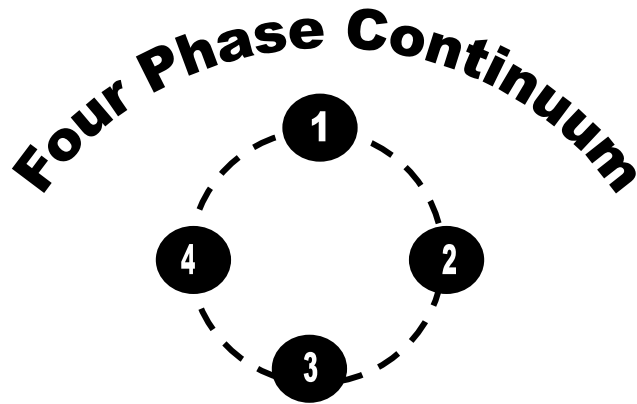
Rubric

Record of growth

Criteria Guidelines

Record of progress

Record of strengths and capacities



Informal Learning

Life skills are acquired informally by observing family members, repeating methods or techniques that have been observed and practicing through trial and error. New skills are often introduced through daily living situations.

Formal Learning

Life skills are acquired through formal instruction and formalized activities. For many young people this formal instruction is provided as part of an educational program or part of an extra curricula activity.

Supervised Practice

During this phase a young person's living arrangement changes. The youth is no longer living with adult's who are responsible for parenting. The youth now resides in some type of supervised independent living situation. Youth are given the opportunity to practice skills learned formally and informally. While the youth practices the skills in a real life situation, the supervision component minimizes the possibility that the inevitable mistakes will have a life threatening effect.

Self Sufficiency

The young person is living independently without the benefit of a safety net. The young person is viewed as an adult and is expected to pay his or her own way. During this phase a young person may seek to improve basic life skills through either formal or informal methods.