



Beginning to Work It Out

Preparing At-Risk Youth for Workplace Success

Dr. Steve Parese 623 North Main St. Danbury, NC 27016
(336) 593-3533 fax (336) 593-2299 www.WorkinItOut.com

PROGRAM INFORMATION

THE PROBLEM

More and more young people are at risk for chronic unemployment, lifelong poverty, and even incarceration. Steady employment in a meaningful job is a powerful resiliency factor, but many of these challenging youth have minimal academic and vocational skills, and are poorly prepared to join the workforce.

In addition, many also struggle with poor impulse control, problems with rules and limits, limited insight into themselves and others, and difficulty getting along with authority figures. As a result, these youth frequently leave potentially good jobs in which they might have found success because they can't resolve day-to-day problems with co-workers and supervisors.

THE SOLUTION

While at-risk youth and young adults may rebel against arbitrary rules, they often respond well to genuine relationships with caring, knowledgeable adults. When delivered by instructors with an understanding of cognitive change and a knack for building rapport with troubled teens, the "Beginning to Work It Out" curriculum has been highly successful in helping youth develop:

- (1) Insight into the personal beliefs which drive counterproductive behaviors;
- (2) Awareness of employers' unspoken expectations,
- (3) Skills for managing strong emotions;
- (4) Skills for dealing with difficult social interactions; and
- (5) Skills for logically solving problems without relying on assumptions.

THE DETAILS

"Beginning to Work It Out" is a 12-lesson cognitive-behavioral program which targets at-risk youth and young adults who may have dropped out of high school and are attempting to enter the job market for the first time.

Through realistic stories with age-appropriate characters and thought-provoking activities, BWIO participants gain self-awareness, emotional self-control, and skills in interpersonal problem solving.

The BWIO program works best when delivered to groups of 8-16 students by 1-2 trained instructors over the course of 2-4 weeks. It may be supplemented with academic and vocational skills training, as well as more traditional pre-employment training such as resume writing, job interviewing, etc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

“Beginning to Work It Out” consists of 12 one-hour lessons. The curriculum is divided into three parts, each focused on a different set of insights and skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Part 1: Beginning to Build Self- Awareness

Lesson 1 Introduction

Lesson 2 Setting Goals

Lesson 3 Beliefs at Home and Work

Lesson 4 Thoughts and Feelings

Part 1 focuses on self-awareness. It helps youth become aware of the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions which justify self-defeating behaviors. It helps them identify the things they MOST want in the next 6-12 months, and shows them how a steady job can help them achieve those goals. It then goes on to help them understand how the beliefs and behaviors that seem appropriate in their personal lives can backfire in the world of work. Skills and insights are applied to specific personal and work-related situations.

Part 2: Beginning to Manage Emotions

Lesson 5 Hot Spots & Warning Signs

Lesson 6 Stop & Think

Lesson 7 Expressing Your Feelings

Part 2 focuses on self-management. It helps youth identify specific emotional triggers, situations which provoke a strong emotional response in them. It then teaches a step-by-step strategy for keeping strong emotions in check, and offers a professional and extremely effective way to express a complaint or concern to a coworker or supervisor. Skills and insights are role-played in specific personal and work-related situations.

Part 3: Beginning Problem Solving Skills

Lesson 8 Problem & Goal

Lesson 9 Info & Insight

Lesson 10 Choices & Consequences

Lesson 11 Plan & Evaluate

Lesson 12 Closing

Part 3 focuses on rational problem solving. It first helps youth simplify overwhelming situations by identifying useful, objective problem and goal statements. It then teaches them to avoid making false assumptions, and to analyze all possible choices before making an impulsive decision. Skills and insights are applied to specific personal and work-related situations.

More information about this program, including samples of the workbook and trainer’s manual, may be downloaded from www.WorkinItOut.com.