

Enhancing Life Skills: A Psychoeducational Life Skills Model

*To Diminish Self Defeating
Behavior and To Promote
Resiliency and Self
Sufficiency*

Among industrialized countries, the United States ranks:

- 1st in military technology
- 1st in Gross Domestic Product
- 1st in the number of millionaires and billionaires
- 1st in health technology
- 1st in military exports
- 1st in defense spending
- 10th in eighth-grade science scores
- 11th in the proportion of children living in poverty
- 16th in living standards among the poorest one-fifth of children
- 16th in efforts to lift children out of poverty
- 17th in rates of low-birthweight births
- 18th in the income gap between rich and poor children
- 21st in eighth-grade math scores
- 22nd in infant mortality
- Last in protecting our children against gun violence

The Process

- The counselor serves as teacher, model, evaluator, encourager, facilitator...
- Student difficulties are viewed as gaps in knowledge rather than maladaptive behaviors.
- The student is active in designing his/her individual improvement plan.

THE EMPHASIS

- Psychoeducational techniques include: instruction, modeling new behaviors, role playing, feedback, and "ownwork."

Skills to Defeat Dysfunctional Behavior and Enhance Resiliency Life Skill Sessions: A Six Step Model

1. Instruction (counselor teaches the skill),
2. Modeling (counselor shows and discusses the skill),
3. Discuss the skill; show how it can be used in daily life
4. Role play (set up a practicing role play with a peer),
5. Feedback (reinforce positive attempts of role players), and
6. "Ownwork" (work to practice outside of the session).

The Process:

- Groups cover one skill in one or two sessions.
- Every member of the group role plays the given skill correctly at least once.
- Role playing serves as behavioral rehearsal for future use.

Selected Social Skills:

- Perception checking
- Conflict mediation
- Conflict resolution
- Peer pressure refusal skills
- Responding with praise
- Giving constructive criticism
- Being socially responsible
- Problem solving
- Assertiveness
- How to Apologize
- Handling Conflict Among Team Members
- Responding with Praise

Selected Emotional Skills:

- Empathy
- Positive self-talk
- Stress management
- Seeking social support
- Problem solving
- Anger management
- Disputing Irrational Ideas
- Self Control Techniques
- Anxiety management
- E.Q.
- Positive affirmations
- Self-disclosure
- Carefronting
- Paraphrasing
- Rationale Self Analysis
- Self talk to Maintain Composure

Selected Cognitive Skills:

- Graphic organizers / Mind maps Creative
- Problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Reducing test anxiety
- SQ3R
- Critical thinking
- Analysis for Bias
- PMI
- CAF
- Evaluation
- Application
- M.I.
- Synthesis
- Metacognition
- Memory Training

**The Life Skill Training Format
As Group Leader:**

1. Present an overview of the social, emotional, or cognitive skill.
- Ask a question to help members define the skill in their own words, such as: "Who can define assertiveness?" "What does assertiveness mean to you?"

**Group Leader's Responsibility:
Teaching Stage**

- Make a statement about what will follow: "After we see examples, we will talk about when and how to use the skill."
- Distribute a skill sheets and read the behavioral steps.
- Ask members to follow each step as it is modeled

**Group Leader: Models the
Social, Emotional or Cognitive
Life Skill**

- (2) Model the behavior following the steps listed.
 - (3) future discussion of the skill as modeled.
- Encourage a dialogue about how and when to use the skill, and barriers to implementation.

Group Leader: Organizes the Role Play

- (4) Select two group members: a practicing member who will choose a partner T
 - "Where will you be talking?"
 - "What will be the time of day?"
 - "What will be the first step of the skill?"
 - "What will you do if your partner does?"
- (5) The role play begins

The Group Leader: Provides Feedback from Group Members

- 6) Process and elicit feedback from group members (the practicing members waits to hear all comments):
 - Partner processes feelings and reactions
 - Observers report success at following skill steps/likes and dislikes
 - Member responds to self satisfaction on a scale of 1-to- 10... "How successful he or she felt about the learning process"

Group Leader: Helps Transfer of Learning to Real Life Situations

- 7)Practicing member is directed to describe when, where, and with whom they will use the skill
 - Assign the "ownwork" report to report back to the group at the next meeting.
 - Direct remaining members to identify situations they will role play at next group meeting.

**Social Literacy Skills
Categories:**

- being kind, cooperative, and compliant to reduce defiance, aggression, conflict, and antisocial behavior;
- showing interest in people and socializing successfully to reduce behavior problems associated with withdrawal, depression, and fearfulness

Social Literacy Skill: How to Apologize

- Identify how you may have hurt or offended someone by word, deed, or action.
- Identify ways that you could "make amends" (e.g., send a card, apologize in writing, make a phone call).
- Choose the best way to apologize for the current situation
- Select a time and place to apologize honestly and sincerely and thank the person for listening

Social Literacy Skill: Problem Solving

Use the acronym SOLVE

- S tate your problem
- O utline your response
- L ist your alternatives
- V iew the consequences
- E valuate your results

Social Literacy Skill: Defusing Anger

1. Let the person express their anger.
2. Don't get defensive -listen attentively.
3. Paraphrase in your own words what you situation.
4. Partner to solve the situation together heard to confirm your perception of the
 - Keep Talking
 - Keep listening
 - Keep Trying

Social Literacy Skill: Sending an "I" Message

"I feel _____
when you _____
Because _____."

"Jake, I feel rejected when you don't return my phone calls, because I really need to know your ideas about this project."

Emotional Literacy Skills

Emotional literacy skills fall into categories such as:

- knowing the relationships between thoughts, feelings, and actions
- establishing a sense of identity and acceptance of self

The most visible emotional skills are people skills like empathy, graciousness, and the ability to read social situations

Emotional Literacy Skill: Self Talk for Stressful Situations

Prior Preparation

- "I have a plan for coping with stress"
- "I know how to relax myself."

Entering the Stress Zone

- "I have a plan, I'll follow it."

Coping with my Emotions

- "I can breathe deeply and relax my tense spots."

Rewarding Success

- "I made it through, I knew I could."

Emotional Literacy Skill: The XYZ Formula for a Complaint

Criticism are usually voiced as personal attacks rather than complaints which create defensiveness... "you're such a loser"... "you can't do anything right!"

- "When you did X, it made me feel Y, and I'd rather you did Z instead."

"When you didn't call to tell me you were going to be late, I feel unappreciated and angry." "I'd wish you would call to let me know you changed your plans."

Emotional Literacy: Requesting Assertively

To convey your thoughts, feelings and wants assertively follow this simple formula: I think... (your perception); I feel... ("I" message); I want... (an assertive request).

"When you joke me in front of my friends you make me look stupid. I feel embarrassed and angry. I want you to stop."

Cognitive Literacy Skills

We learn...

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we both see and hear
- 70% of what is discussed with others
- 89% of what we experience personally
- 95% of what we teach to someone else

Cognitive Literacy Skill: Rock Acronym

- **R**ead carefully for ideas, purpose, organization and point of view
- **O**rganize the summary
- **C**ondense ideas to one simple complex sentence
- **K**eep it short; attend to the author's key words

Cognitive Literacy Skill: Analysis for Bias

- **B**e aware of point-of-view
- **I**ndicate examples of bias clues (EOIOC):
 - Exaggeration ("never," "always")
 - Overgeneralization
 - Imbalance
 - Opinion as fact ("They say")
 - Charged words ("You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know")
- **A**ccount for possible bias by citing proof
- **S**tate opinion based on reasoned judgment

Profile of the School Shooters:

Prong One: Personality Traits and Behaviors

- *Leakage: one of the most important clues that may precede an adolescent's violent act (subtle threats, ultimatums spoken or written in diaries, essays, poems, letters, songs, drawings, doodles, tattoos, or videos)*
- *Low Tolerance for Frustration: easily hurt by real or perceived injustice; difficulty tolerating frustration*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Poor Coping Skills: inability to deal with frustration, criticism, disappointment, failure rejection or humiliation.*
- *Lack of Resiliency: unable to bounce back from a set back when some time has elapsed.*
- *Failed Love Relationship: feels rejected and cannot accept it*
- *Injustice Collector: Will not forgive those wrongs or people responsible; keeps a hit list*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Signs of Depression: lethargic, physical fatigue, dark outlook on life, hopelessness, helplessness.*
- *Narcissism: self-centered; blames others for failures; assumes an attitude of self-importance to mask feelings of unworthiness .*
- *Alienation: feelings of isolation, sadness, loneliness, not belonging, not fitting in*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Dehumanizes Others: Views other people as "nonpersons" or objects to be thwarted; often appears in writings and art work*
- *Lack of Empathy: inability to understand the feelings of others; unconcerned about anyone's feelings; ridicules them*
- *Exaggerated Sense of Entitlement: Expects special treatment and consideration*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Attitude of Superiority: Presents himself as smarter, more creative, more talented, more experienced, and more worldly than others*
- *Exaggerated or Pathological Need for attention: need for attention either positive or negative*
- *Externalizes Blame: Refuses to take responsibility for own actions and typically faults other people*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Anger Management Problems: tends to burst out in temper tantrums or melodramatic displays or brood and sulk*
- *Intolerance: Expresses racial or religious or intolerant attitudes toward minorities*
- *Manipulates others*
- *Lack of trust: untrusting and suspicious of others motives and intentions; may approach a clinically paranoid state*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Closed Social Group: Associates only with a single small group (trench coat mafia)*
- *Fascinated with Violence-Filled Entertainment: themes of violence, hatred, control, power, death and destruction*
- *Negative Role Models: Hitler, Satan or others associated with violence and destruction*

Profiles of the School Shooters:

- *Turbulent Parent-Child Relationship: Expresses contempt for parents and rejects their role in his life; also evidence of violence in the home*
- *Acceptance of Pathological Behavior: Don't react to disturbing behavior; when contact by school officials appear unconcerned, minimize the problem, or reject the reports*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Access to Weapons: Family keeps guns, weapons or explosive material in the home; support it as normal means of intimidating someone else in a dispute*
- *Lack of Intimacy: Family has lack of intimacy or closeness*
- *Student Rules the Roost: Parents set no limits on conduct; parents have little information about his activities, school life, or friends*

Profile of the School Shooters

- *Student's Attachment to School: Detached from school, other students, teachers and school activities*
- *Tolerance for Disrespectful Behavior: Bullying is part of the school culture; school atmosphere promotes racial or class divisions*
- *Inadequate Discipline: Discipline is inequitably applied*

Profile of the School Shooters

- *Pecking Order Among Students: Certain groups of students are given more prestige making them more important to the school*
- *Code of Silence: "Code of Silence" prevails; little trust between students and staff*

Profile of the School Shooters:

- *Media, Entertainment, Technology: Easy and unmonitored access to extreme violence drugs and alcohol*
- *The Copycat Effect: Violent incidents that receive intense media attention generate copycat violence elsewhere; threats increased nationwide after a shooting*

**Don't Forget to Send in Your
"See Me/See You" Assignment!**


