

Introduction

It is well accepted today that a youth's social competence relates to more positive outcomes as adults (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015). In their review of 75 studies of school-based social emotional learning, Sklad and colleagues cited that most studies reported an increase in social skills and a decrease in antisocial behavior (Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, & Gravesteyn, 2012). Planned and direct instruction in social skills empowers students to get their needs met in desirable ways, helps them learn important social behaviors to deal effectively with increased social demands, and positively impacts their learning. For peers and teachers, social skills instruction results in a more positive school climate and more time for teachers to spend on academic instruction instead of discipline, leading to a more rewarding learning and teaching experience.

Skillstreaming the Adolescent: A Guide for Teaching Prosocial Skills (McGinnis, 2012) describes a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to teaching social skills to adolescents. Anyone planning to develop a Skillstreaming program will want to acquire a thorough knowledge of the procedures in this program text.

Many practitioners have asked just how to begin Skillstreaming instruction. To address this need, the leader's guide and student workbook were developed as I reflected on my own beginning instruction. In addition, because Skillstreaming is comprised of well-researched principles, it is important to implement the instruction as designed. These materials are intended to transfer these principles into easily implemented strategies for leaders and others. This leader's guide and the accompanying student workbook will further assist leaders in introducing and guiding this learning through step-by-step procedures.

Specifically, the guide and workbook include three separate sections with discussion points or activities that create important interactions between the leader and learners. Section 1 guides the learners through the four key parts of Skillstreaming: modeling, role-play, feedback, and

generalization by learning a single skill: Starting a Conversation. Section 2 structures the teaching and learning of important concepts and sub-skills needed in skill performance such as understanding non-verbal communication, costs and benefits of choices, and communication skills to enhance the effectiveness of Skillstreaming. Sample activities to teach more complex social nuances, such as how to select the skill to use, and when and where the learner should use this skill, are provided in Section 3. Group leaders may then expand this learning by creating other activities depending on the needs of the learners.

The student workbook is also an excellent tool for involving parents in the Skillstreaming process. A brief introduction to the program, written expressly for parents, is included. Group leaders can easily communicate what students are learning by asking students to take home the workbook following the completion of each section, as well as other times if desired. When parents know more about the program, they are more willing and able to support their adolescent's skill practice outside the training setting.

To conduct the activities, you'll need a whiteboard or easel pad. Before using the workbook, it is also helpful to prepare the following items, included in the appendix:

- Parts to Skillstreaming Poster
- Starting a Conversation Skill Poster
- Starting Conversation Skill Cards (optional)

References

- Gabrielli, C., Ansel, D., & Krachman, S. B. (2015). *Ready to be counted: The research case for education policy action on non-cognitive skills*. Boston, MA: Transforming Education.
- Sklad, M., Kieksstra, R., Ritter, M. D., Ben, J. & Gravesteyn, C. (2012). Effectiveness of school-based universal social, emotional, and behavioral programs: Do they enhance students' development in the area of skill, behavior, and adjustment? *Psychology in the Schools*, 49(9), 892–909.