

4-H Training Topics - Introduction to Life Skills

Background:

Life Skills and Youth Development go hand-in-hand. The overarching goal of CYS Services programs should be to help children/youth develop into successful, contributing members of society. By incorporating Life Skills into School-Age and Youth Programs, staff members can make a lasting, positive impact on the life of every child or youth who walks through the door.

Resource:

Targeting Life Skills Model
(Iowa State University 1996)

Materials Needed:

Statements on cards for activity. Examples of statements include:

- What is your name?
- My dog has run away from me.
- I had to finish the work myself.
- Where did you get those books?

Be sure to include where emphasis should be placed (see **Doing An Activity** example).

Targeting Life Skills handout

Visual or Handout – Life Skill definition; Resiliency definition; and Resiliency traits

Preparation Time:

Allow 15 minutes for preparation and set-up.

1 Staff and Introductions

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
Have the agenda posted on an overhead, newsprint, or handout. Welcome everyone, and introduce the trainer and participants. Limit the participant introductions to no more than one minute each.	Welcome to Life Skills training. Learning about Life Skills and how to incorporate them into CYS Services is critical to providing quality youth development programming for young people. But first, let's have some introductions – give your name and role at CYS Services.	3-5

2 Today's Topic

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
What does the term "Life Skills" Mean? Allow a couple of minutes for definitions. Have someone record them on newsprint.	How would you define the term "Life Skill?"	2

3 Doing an Activity

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
Ask everyone to find a partner (could be a group of three if there is an uneven number). Allow space since each group will be talking. Pass out sheets containing written statements that can be said a number of different ways.	<p>It's time to test the old adage "It's not what you say, but how you say it." Everyone needs to find a partner; it's okay to have three people. Each pair or group will be given a statement. One should speak the statement to the other placing emphasis on the word or phrase that's underlined.</p> <p>For example: Come over here. (Speak normally) Come over here. Come <u>over</u> here. Come over <u>here</u>. Come over here! (Speak forcefully) <u>Come over here.</u> (Speak timidly) Come over here. (Speak with frustration)</p>	5

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4 Reflecting and Applying

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
Reflect on the activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened to the perceived meaning of the statement when emphasis was put on different words? • What happened to the perceived mood of the speaker when the statement was spoken in different tones? 	10
Apply the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would it be important to change the emphasis or tone of a statement? • What often happens to the listener's perception of the speaker when the tone is "less than pleasant?" • How do emphasis and tone affect tactfulness? • How does tactfulness affect a person's influence on and acceptance by others? 	

5 Defining Life Skills

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
<p>Using an overhead, newsprint, handout or some type of visual, present the simple definition of Life Skill under What to Say.</p> <p>Refer participants to the <i>4-H 101</i> manual section on Life Skills.</p>	<p>Before the communication activity everyone shared a definition of Life Skills. Simply put, a Life Skill helps a person be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. As the term implies, it's a skill that lasts a lifetime and is useful in any career or lifestyle. One of these skills is communication.</p> <p>More information on "Targeting Life Skills" is in the <i>4-H 101</i> Manual. This manual is downloadable from the 4-H Military Partnerships website found at http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org</p>	10

6 Reflecting and Applying

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
Hand out copies of the Targeting Life Skills wheel.	The Targeting Life Skills model is based on the four H's of Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Each of the four quadrants is divided into two Life Skill categories; each Life Skill category is divided into three to five individual Life Skills.	5
Briefly discuss how the wheel expands. Have the wheel on the overhead or hold it up and point to each area as it is discussed.	Let's look closer at one part of the wheel. Under the "Head" quadrant are the categories "Managing" and "Thinking". Under the "Managing" category are Life Skills of "Resiliency," "Keeping Records," "Wise Use of Resources," "Planning and Organizing," and "Goal Setting."	

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7 Targeting Resiliency

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
<p>Focus on one Life Skill – Resiliency. It is used because it is a skill Army youth should master to thrive and reach their full potential during periods of deployment. Ask for at least two or three definitions of Resiliency.</p> <p>Have the definition of Resiliency on a visual or handout in a three-bullet type format, point to each bullet as it's reviewed.</p> <p>Encourage participants to think about people they know who are very resilient, and try to pinpoint their personal traits. Have someone record the responses.</p> <p>Using a visual or handout, show traits that resilient people have. Read the traits one at a time, and allow participants to comment.</p>	<p>Let's focus a few minutes on the Life Skill of Resiliency and look at what things are involved in helping kids develop this skill. What is Resiliency?</p> <p>Resiliency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover after experiencing misfortune or distress • Cope with change • Overcome problems and difficulties <p>Think of people who are resilient. What are some traits that resilient people tend to have?</p> <p>People with one or more of these traits tend to be more resilient than those without any of these traits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty seen as a situation that can be endured or solved • Good interpersonal skills • Variety of interests and goals • Flexibility • Attitude of hope or persistence • Sense of self-worth 	<p>3</p>

8 Closing

What to Do	What to Say	Minutes
<p>Ask participants to think back to the communication activity. Ask what trait will be most helpful in teaching the Life Skill of Resiliency (Answer: Good interpersonal skills)</p>	<p>Remember the communications activity when emphasis and tone were used to communicate? Think back on that now as it relates to teaching the Life Skill of Resiliency. From the list of traits of resilient people, which one ties into the way we say things to other people?</p> <p>What we've learned is that good interpersonal skills are important in developing the Life Skill of Resiliency. How we talk to others influences how we're accepted. As we learn proper emphasis and tone in our speech, we're also developing good interpersonal skills; this has a positive impact on our ability to be resilient.</p> <p>Resiliency was taught through the communication activity but it also applies to other Life Skills. Teaching Life Skills requires reflecting on and applying what is learned during an activity. To properly teach Life Skills the reflecting and applying process cannot be skipped.</p> <p>Thank you for coming to discover how Life Skills can be taught. Are there questions?</p>	<p>2</p>