

Life Skills Curriculum Overview

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DES MOINES AREA
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PARTNERS WITH

IOWA CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN

WEEK 1: WELCOME - ORIENTATION & ASSESSMENT

Instructor welcomes students telling them that s/he is very excited that they are going to be sharing a lot of time together. Instructor provides an overview of the topics and expected outcomes for the next twelve weeks. The topics were selected because of their impact on success and recidivism. The goal of the instructor is to help the students integrate what they will learn into their lives in a way that allows them to make better decisions, with the most important choice being to conduct themselves in a way that they stay out of prison.

Instructor explains the assessments and their purpose is to see where everyone is so the instructor can better teach them. The goal of the assessment is not to make them feel stupid and that by the last part of each of the math and reading assessments, they may not know the answers and it is okay.

Understanding your personality and what you value is the first and most important step in discovering how to get along with others and what to look for in an ideal career. The goal of this session is to identify the “color” with values with which we most identify and sort down to values with which we least identify. This will allow us to see that there are many ways to view the world other than the way we do, and that it is okay to disagree.

Managing time is critical to success. It goes to understanding how to timeline a project which is critical to staying on task and achieving goals. Knowing how to breakdown a project into manageable pieces is often difficult. DMACC planners are distributed to help maintain schedules.

Students often have dreams and not goals. Putting their dreams into a SMART format allows them to see how to achieve their goals and live out their dream. It will also allow them to decide if the dream is achievable do to the time and resources involved in making it happen. It gives students control and manageability over their level of success in achieving their goals.

WEEK 2: THINKING FOR A CHANGE

Many students do not realize to stay out of prison; their past relationships cannot function in the same way as they did when they were engaging in criminal behavior. This session will teach students how to deal with the grief and loss of past relationships. In addition to showing the importance of having a positive mentor in their life who can help them pick healthy friends and plan for their family’s impact on success and how to recover from setbacks.

The goal of this workshop is to show people that they can gain control of their life by gaining control of their attitude. During this

Worksheets/ Handouts/ Speakers

WEEK 1

- Life Skills - Empowering Women“
- My Commitment”
- Student Info/ Photo Release
- Computer Sign-In Info
- What is a Computer?
- Comp. Knowledge Questionnaire
- Classroom/ Computer Lab Rules & Ms. Buckingham’s Class Expectations
- Planners/ Big Rocks Story & Worksheet
- Student Kite for Release CD
- Open Computer Lab Hours
- Speaker Feedback Forms
- 10 Thoughts for complete Living
- Qualities of a Pencil
- Ice Breaker
- Bag Lady
- CASAS Testing
- Who are you?
- Group Roles - Who am I?
- Colors Survey
- Lifeline Questions & Worksheet
- Personal Goal Worksheet
- Setting SMART Goals

WEEK 2

- Butterfly Story & Worksheet
- Knowing your feelings/ Feelings chart
- Communication - Listening Skills/ Active Listening
- Asking Questions
- Giving Feedback
- Problem solving
- Avoiding Solving Your Problems

workshop they will discover what an attitude is, where it comes from, and what to expect from it. It will give you control over yours!

Good communication skills, written, verbal, and non-verbal are the foundation to success. These sessions will teach students the fundamentals of writing clearly and correctly; speaking to share ideas, listening for facts, and how non-verbals speak louder than any method of communication.

WEEK 3: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Many students have never kept a job longer than a few weeks. They are unsure of what is required to find and keep a job. This session will help them to identify their skills, uncover strengths and weaknesses, and understand employer expectations. An IWD representative will speak to the class and help ascertain needs and abilities.

WEEK 4: WELLNESS - PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Wellness, physical and mental, is not something many students have given any consideration. This session covers sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition, and what is preventative health care.

WEEK 5: COMMUNITY TRANSITION & RE-ENTRY

Many students do not realize to stay out of prison; their past relationships cannot function in the same way as they did when they were engaging in criminal behavior. This session will teach students how to deal with the grief and loss of past relationships. In addition to showing the importance of having a positive mentor in their life who can help them pick healthy friends and plan for their family's impact on success and how to recover from setbacks.

Instructor should welcome students to end of the session telling them that s/he is very excited that they are going to be able to use all their new tools soon as they leave the facility. Instructor reviews the topics and asks if their expected outcomes were met. The goal of the instructor is to help the students integrate what they learned into their lives in a way that allows them to make better decisions, with the most important choice being to conduct themselves in a way that they stay out of prison.

WEEK 6: MOCK INTERVIEW WEEK

A Career Development Plan is a strategic guide to help prepare and navigate your career. It is a road map to success. Without it, you will end up where you end up, and that might not be where you want to go with your career. This session will teach students how to look for the right job, interview to get it, and how to keep it and advance their career

Worksheets/ Handouts/ Speakers

WEEK 3

- Sherry Tate from Iowa Workforce Development
- Clips & Videos on applying for a job
- Evelyn Davis Job History Worksheet

WEEK 4

- Butterfly Story & Worksheet
- Knowing your feelings
- Feelings chart
- Listening Skills
- Active Listening
- Asking Questions
- Giving Feedback
- Problem solving
- Avoiding Solving Your Problems
- Apologizing/ Making a complaint
- Cognitive Change
- It's OK to ask for help
- Learning to say NO
- Practicing saying NO
- Self-Image Inventory
- Self-Image exercises 1 & 2
- Serenity/ Therapy - Comm. Styles
- Thinking Errors
- Get SMART - Goals for Health
- 10 Traditional Tips/ Better Health
- Wellness Handout
- Goal Setting Steps
- My Plate, My Health
- BMI Chart
- Healthy Activities at Home
- Self-Love
- Self-Nurturing Restorative Box
- I Love Myself
- How to love yourself

WEEK 7: BASIC FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Budgeting and planning spending are foreign concepts for many people. The information and resources provided by ISU Extension and ISED will help the students see two views on how to plan and budget their money. Both speakers will also provide several options for investing and growing savings. The bank representative explains saving and checking accounts.

The goals for this workshop are to inform students about the unique barriers faced by individuals from poverty and provide strategic tools to utilize in helping them to overcome those barriers.

Transportation is a big issue for many students. Some will not be able to possess a driver's license for at least several years. Other may not be able to afford a car and insurance. In this session students will learn the status of their driving record and fines owed for driving violations. Additional transportation options are also discussed.

Finding **housing** before they leave the facility or work release often times is not easy for the students. Housing Opportunities Made Easy, Inc will give them felon friendly options. It is also critical for students to understand their rights and responsibilities as a renter and/or home owner. This session will provide that information.

WEEK 8: TECHNOLOGY WEEK

WEEK 9: PERSONAL APPEARANCE - DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

WEEK 10: EMBRACING THE REAL YOU

Students often have dreams and not goals or plans to stay out of prison. This re-entry transition session allows students to discuss their fears and plan how to achieve their goals, specifically how to stay out of prison. It gives students control and manageability over their level of success in achieving their goals

WEEK 11: COMPUTER LAB WEEK

The Office Skills curriculum provides a basic understanding of the components in the Office 2003 software series: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. These components will provide the offenders with a basic literacy in the most frequently used computer applications.

WEEK 12: GRADUATION WEEK