



*Living a Life of Excellence.*



THE  
**DIAMOND  
STANDARD**



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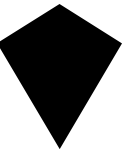
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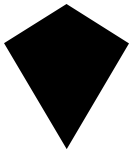
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## THE DIAMOND STANDARD

A Promising Future's Diamond Standard curriculum is a success and relationship development workshop series that provides valuable information, skills and resources to help emerging adults discover the psycho-social keys to whole-person health and building a successful future.

Adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 – 25 are among the least served and highest risk populations in the nation. Known as “emerging adults”, this population faces rapid changes in responsibility levels, social resources, relationships, education, and career development. They are also most likely to be involved in life-altering, high risk behaviors.

This curriculum is specifically designed to reach the most disenfranchised populations, including those with limited educational attainment. The literacy levels have been adjusted to ensure ease of comprehension and participation. The content, teaching modalities and curricula design are based on the psycho-social development of an emerging adult.

## OVERALL THEME: LIVING THE DIAMOND STANDARD

Throughout the workshop series, the story of how a diamond is developed from coal to a brilliant gem is used as a metaphor for the personal development process. With each new session, participants will begin to uncover skills and resources to help reveal the treasure that lies within themselves.

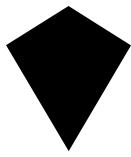
## PSYCHO-SOCIAL, EVIDENCE-BASED METHODOLOGY

The curriculum is written using a psycho-social science methodology. The underlying science framework is detailed below. All sessions are developed around the whole-person approach that includes discussion about the way in which the subject impacts an individual physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually/morally. Predominantly, the curriculum works on developing participants internal assets to increase self-efficacy and likelihood of success, with strategies that can be implemented to improve external assets.

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Implementing positive youth development strategies in schools and communities can increase protective factors associated with reduced risk behaviors. The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development funded a meta-analysis to identify the core elements of positive youth development programs that increase potential for success. These programs seek to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- 1. Promotes bonding**
- 2. Fosters resilience**
- 3. Promotes social competence**
- 4. Promotes emotional competence**
- 5. Promotes cognitive competence**
- 6. Promotes behavioral competence**
- 7. Promotes moral competence**
- 8. Fosters self-determination**
- 9. Fosters spirituality**
- 10. Fosters self-efficacy**
- 11. Fosters clear & positive identity**
- 12. Fosters belief in the future**
- 13. Provides recognition for positive behavior**
- 14. Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement**
- 15. Fosters prosocial norms**



## SOCIAL NORMING THEORY

This theory is an underlying psycho-social perspective used in many medical, mental health and media forums to impact attitudinal and behavioral change. Social norms have significant impact on both thought and behavior. People tend to adopt attitudes and act in accordance to group expectations and behaviors in an effort to achieve acceptance and fulfill social connection needs. By highlighting statistics that accurately reflect the positive choices of populations, prevention efforts can utilize social norms in a constructive way.

## SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

People learn through observing others' behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors. Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Bandura identified four primary elements necessary for an individual to take an observed behavior and implement it as a personal choice: 1) Attention: anything that detracts the participant's attention is going to have a negative effect on observational learning. If the instruction is interesting or uses a novel aspect to the situation, an individual is more likely to dedicate full attention; 2) Retention: information has to be provided in a manner through which the individual can easily recall the information later and act on it; 3) Reproduction: people will only attempt to change a behavior if they believe they have the ability to perform at an acceptable level, thus opportunities to practice the observed behavior are necessary to build a belief in self efficacy; 4) Motivation: In order for observational learning to be successful, an individual must be able to identify the positive reward for implementing a positive behavior change.

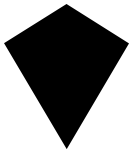
## CHARACTER EDUCATION

According to Thomas Lickona, seminal researcher for character development, "character education is the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue - that is, objectively good human qualities that are good for the individual person and good for the whole society..."

Children are most likely to become persons of character when they grow up in communities of character, where there is an effort on the part of families, schools, churches, temples, mosques, the media, the government, sports leagues, the chamber of commerce - everyone who has the opportunity to influence the values of young people - to both model and teach these character qualities... This would include qualities such as honesty, compassion, courage, kindness, self-control, cooperation, diligence or hard work, all the kinds of qualities that we need to both lead a fulfilling life and to be able to live together harmoniously and productively."

## COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THEORY

The basic premise behind Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is that behaviors are the direct result of a person's internal thoughts and emotional content. How a person perceives and interprets a situation and then attaches emotion to the interpretation directly impacts behaviors. In cognitive oriented therapies, the typical objective is to identify and monitor thoughts, assumptions, beliefs and behaviors that are associated with negative emotions and to identify those which are dysfunctional, inaccurate, or simply unhelpful. Once unhealthy thought patterns and behaviors are identified, the individual develops a plan to respond from a more positive perspective in the future. CBT is an evidence-based treatment recommended by public health and mental health associations as an effective way to address a number of mental health difficulties and social development challenges.



## DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

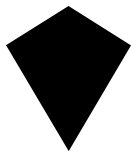
The Search Institute and the Social Development Research Group conducted a meta-analysis of 50 theoretical and empirical explorations of successful adult development. The results of these studies indicate eight key components to successful adult transition. The following table provides a brief overview of these factors.

<p><b>Physical health</b>   <i>Good nutrition, regular exercise, no substance abuse or dependence, safe sexual behavior, avoiding violence, no drinking and driving</i></p>
<p><b>Psychological and emotional well-being</b>   <i>Positive self identity, life satisfaction, positive outlook, sense of purpose, prosocial orientation</i></p>
<p><b>Life skills</b>   <i>Decision-making, emotional self regulation, interpersonal skills, self-efficacy, financial responsibility</i></p>
<p><b>Ethical behavior</b>   <i>Telling the truth, keeping promises, avoiding crime, obeying the law, calling in sick only when really sick, demonstrating care and concern for others, taking responsibility for oneself</i></p>
<p><b>Healthy family and social relationships</b>   <i>Bonding and frequent interactions with a parent, an intimate partner, and with peer(s); involvement in groups such as community sports teams, church groups, music groups, dance classes</i></p>
<p><b>Educational attainment</b>   <i>High-school completion, completion of post-secondary degree or occupational certification</i></p>
<p><b>Constructive engagement</b>   <i>Over 35 hours per week in school, employment, or homemaking</i></p>
<p><b>Civic engagement</b>   <i>Volunteer work, political participation, charitable giving</i></p>

## TEACHING MODALITIES

The Diamond Standard program is developed on the theory of total-period learning wherein participants are engaged in the subject matter during the entire time they are gathered. Engaging the emerging adult population requires using a multi-modal style of presentation. Each session has various components to engage interests:

- ◆ **Questions of the Day:** These subject-specific questions help participants get to know each other at a deeper level with the potential to form a support network for success.
- ◆ **Physical Activities & Games:** Many emerging adults are kinesthetic learners and require the opportunity to engage their sense in order to more deeply process the core elements of the subject matter.



- ◆ **Fill-in-the-blank Worksheets:** These pages are more effective than a traditional handout because they require the participant to listen for clues within the presenter's message in order to complete the blanks. Due to varying literacy levels, it is very important for the presenter to provide the answers in a visible, written form on an easel pad, white board or PowerPoint presentation.
- ◆ **Small Group Dialogue:** Most sessions have at least one small group opportunity to discuss individual views and ideas pertinent to the subject. Small groups allow participants who are a bit more reserved to engage in the dialogue in a non-threatening manner.
- ◆ **Creative Expression:** Famous quotes and poetry are used throughout the curriculum to engage participants who are more inclined toward abstract, creative thought. In addition, written and graphic creativity opportunities are used throughout to help participants begin to create easily retrievable symbolism linked to their personal experience with the subject matter.
- ◆ **Dialogue-based Workshop Style Presentation:** Research on this curriculum indicates that participants are most inclined to remain engaged in sessions that feel more like a workshop than a classroom. Presenters are encouraged to use minimal didactic (one-way) teaching and incorporate questions throughout the presentation to promote equitable interactivity.
- ◆ **Take-home Activities:** Providing take-home activities gives participants an opportunity to further assimilate the information into their personal awareness and belief system. Each session ends in a "Take It Home" series of questions for deeper contemplation on the subject and tips for building stronger knowledge and skill sets specific to each topic.

<sup>i</sup> Social Development Research Group. Positive Youth Development in the United States. National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. Accessed online at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PositiveYouthDev99/preface.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> Cialdini, R.B. (2001). The science of persuasion. *The Scientific American*, 284(2), 76-82.

<sup>iii</sup> Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

<sup>iv</sup> Bandura, A. (2000). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman

<sup>v</sup> Early Childhood Today (2001). ECT Interview with Thomas Lickona, PhD Talks About Character Education. Accessed online at: [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)

<sup>vi</sup> Warman D. & Beck, A. (2003). *About Treatments & Supports: Cognitive-Behavioral Theory*. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Accessed online at: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

<sup>vii</sup> The Search Institute and Social Development Research Group (2004). Successful Young Adult Development. December 10, 2004, Accessed online at: <http://www.search-institute.org/content/gates-foundation-successful-young-adult-development>