

Lesson Plan

Objective: To teach the component skills of **self-determination**.

Setting and Materials: Classroom based sessions are implemented in a small-group format of 3 to 8 students and co-led by two instructors associated with the project and an adult mentor with a disability. Implementation of the family support and education takes place within family homes, during times that were convenient for family members.

Content taught

Classroom-Based Competency Building Program

The purpose is to provide students with the opportunity to learn, practice, and refine the skills, knowledge, and attitudes identified as necessary for self-determination. Opportunities are provided for students to identify those personal characteristics that could help them take greater control over their lives, develop a personal vision for the future, enhance their self-determination skills, learn more about the systems that provide them with services, and better understand their rights and responsibilities.

Curriculum consists of 10 modules:

1. Self-awareness: gain an understanding of who they are as individuals
2. Self-esteem: examine their own esteem and identify ways to maintain positive self-esteem
3. Perceptions of personal control: identify areas in their lives in which they would like to have more control and develop strategies for gaining increased control.
4. Personal values: identify sources of values in the community, values their families identified as important, and values they held for themselves.
5. Goal setting: understanding short- and long-term goals and provided practice in identifying and setting goals.
6. Assertive communication: practice verbal and nonverbal communication and listening skills. Involves role-played situations with passive, aggressive, and assertive communication styles.
7. Choice making: acquisition of the steps necessary for choice making: recognizing opportunities for choice, generating alternative, evaluating alternative, and selecting an alternative.
8. Self-regulation: assist them in being able to regulate their own behavior in order to reach a goal.
9. Problem solving: steps in solving problems and an opportunity to discuss previous experiences with solving problems.
10. Personal advocacy: promote discussion about rights, responsibilities, and ways to be a self-advocate. Guest speakers from local advocacy organizations are to be a part of the module.

Family Education and Support Program

The family support and education component of the curriculum is to be implemented individually with families concurrently with competency building sessions. The purpose is to educate families about the construct of self-determination, furnish them with information regarding its importance, and provide them with practical strategies that could be used to support the development and exercise of self-determination. Topics both supplement and complement the classroom-based program.

Curriculum contains 8 modules:

1. Personal futures planning: provide a format for the family to share information about the focus person with the facilitator and with each other. Students, with the assistance of their families, describe their background and history; their relationships; the places they go in the community; and their preferences, choices, and focus on the future.
2. Conducting family meetings: help families identify successful strategies for communication, decision-making, and discussing issues as a group. Family members evaluated the manner in which they made family decisions and practiced new strategies to incorporate in their meetings.
3. Balancing family values and self-determination: help families identify what was important to them as individuals and as a group and to facilitate understanding of how these values have an impact on the self-determination of family members.
4. Supporting choice making: assist family members in identifying how they make choices and how they could improve their decision making, as well as increase opportunities and support for the focus person in this area.
5. Enhancing problem solving: examine the importance of problem solving and its relation to self-determination, as well as to explore family members' problem-solving styles. Families are presented with information regarding steps to effective interpersonal problem solving and discussed how family members could support each other in this area.
6. Realizing your vision: help families and the focus individual in generating personal and family goals and plans for the future, as well as in identifying the behaviors, actions, or steps necessary to reach those goals.
7. Strengthening personal advocacy: assist the family in better understanding personal advocacy and identifying how they could support each other when advocating for themselves.
8. Creating linkages within the community: guide the family in gaining a broader perspective on the resources in their community and how to effectively access these as supports.

Teaching procedure

Classroom-Based Competency Building Program

- Classroom-based competency-building sessions are to be implemented over a 7- month period in 24 weekly session of approximately 90 minutes in length.
- Expose students to information that would help them better understand a specific competency related to self-determination.
- Devote time to experiential learning to encourage active learning.
 1. Classroom exercises
 2. Role playing

3. Dyadic or small-group simulations.

- Each instructional session begins with a summary of the previous meeting, including a review of key terms and concepts and a discussion of any “homework” (community application of skills/concepts) from the previous session.
- The remainder of instructional time entails the presentation of key concepts and skills, individual and group learning experiences and discussion, and a brief review of the material as a closure to the session.
- Activities are also provided to practice skills outside of sessions in other environments.

Family Education and Support Program

- Each module takes between one and four sessions to present, with each session lasting approximately 2 hours.
- Implementation of the curriculum takes place within family homes, during times that are convenient for family members.
- Facilitators are responsible for communicating the goals and objectives of each module, introducing and explaining activities to family members, and facilitating discussion.
- During activities, facilitators observe and listen to family members, ask questions to generate discussion, document responses in writing as needed, and when appropriate, share their own experiences.

Method of evaluation

Primary data for this program evaluation were collected through the use of two self-report rating scales designed specifically to assess the degree to which students with disabilities possess the competencies necessary for self-determination and exercise control over their lives.

- The Self-determination Skills Evaluation Scale (SDSES) (Abery & Eggebeen, 1992a) is a 75-item, 5-point behavior rating scale designed to assess the degree to which raters have observed various skills/behaviors related to self-determination over a 3-month period of time.
- The degree to which participants exercised self-determination was assessed through the use of the Opportunity and Exercise of Self-Determination Scale (OESDS) (Abery & Eggebeen, 1992b).

Lesson plan based on: Abery, B., Rudrud, L., Arndt, K., Schauben, L., & Eggebeen, A. (1995). Evaluating a multicomponent program for enhancing the self-determination of youth with disabilities. Intervention in School and Clinic, 30, 170-179.