PROMOTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR FUTURE SUCCESS: A CURRICULUM FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

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Introduction

- Students first year of high school is marked as a defining “make or break” year for high school graduation (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010, p.447).
- The transition from middle school to high school can be difficult for some students. Students with histories of school failure can become more disengaged from the educational process (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010).
- Factors such as increased academic demand, the responsibility students hold for their own academic progress, and the social adjustment they have to make entering a new school contribute to students stress of transitioning (Schoeneberger, 2012).
- Parent involvement in schools increases academic achievement, as well as educational expectations (McNeal, 2015).
- Students with high parental involvement are motivated to engage in school and strive for high academic achievement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).
Social Work Relevance

- This project follows the core values of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2008).
- The core values emphasized in this project are: service, dignity and worth of people, and the importance of human relationships.
- The workshop aims to provide a service to parents and their students by addressing the school dropout social problem.
- Parents and students will be treated with dignity and respect. Students will be taught skills to help empower them to make their own positive life choices. Parents will be encouraged to keep an open line of communication with their students and be involved as a support system.
Cross-Cultural Relevance

- Students who are more likely to drop out of school are ethnic minorities of a low socioeconomic background (Schoeneberger, 2012).
- First generation Latino students are the most likely to drop out of school due to low academic achievement (Patterson, Hale, & Stessman, 2007)
- Black students are twice as likely to drop out than White students (Schoeneberger, 2012).
- Of students who attend schools where graduating high school is not the norm, 46% are Black and 39% are Hispanic (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007)
- Approximately one-third of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) adolescents drop out of school due to harassment and an unsafe environment (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012).
Methods

Curriculum Rationale

• Feeling a sense of school connectedness is one of the strongest protective factors for youth to prevent adverse behaviors (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2009).
  ▫ Having supportive adults, belonging to a positive peer group, making a commitment to education, and school environment are found to increase school connectedness.

• Having transition programs that cover topics necessary for new students to be successful in high school are recommended for incoming ninth graders (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005).

• Parental involvement in academics can help foster the line of communication between parent and student (Hill et al., 2004).
Curriculum

Curriculum purpose:
• Educate ninth grade students and their parents on the benefits of making a commitment to stay in and graduate from high school.

Objectives for Parents:
1. Knowing and understanding the benefits of their children staying in school.
2. Knowing the risk factors (reasons) for students dropping out of school.
3. Increasing their confidence in their ability to support their children’s academic success.
4. Developing strategies for helping their children achieve academic success

Objectives for Students:
1. Increasing the knowledge about the benefits of staying in school.
2. Increasing their understanding of the reasons why students drop out of school.
3. Increasing their feelings of a sense of school connectedness.
4. Developing supports to make a “staying in school commitment,” including obtaining support from family, peers, and school personnel.
Curriculum

Parents Curriculum:
This curriculum is offered in three 90-minute meetings to engage parents in the academic process.

Meeting #1, Achieving Success for your Children
Meeting #2, Supporting your Children
Meeting #3, Communication with your Children

Student Curriculum:
This curriculum is offered in three 75-minute meetings the first semester of ninth grade, with a fourth supplementary 75-minute meeting upon the second semester starting.

Meeting #1, Getting That Diploma!
Meeting #2, Knowing Strategies
Meeting #3, Asking for Help
Meeting #4, Moving Forward
Evaluation

- This curriculum will utilize the Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) level one evaluation: participant satisfaction.

- The participant satisfaction survey, adapted from Petras and Pasztor (2016), will be used to improve the workshops for the next year.

- The survey will ask parents and students if the information was helpful for them and if they felt comfortable during the meetings.

- This level one satisfaction survey will be provided to parents on their final meeting.

- This level one satisfaction survey will be provided to students on their third meeting.
Implications for Social Work

- Social workers should have the ability to develop programs/groups that address the issues their clients are facing.

- School social workers have the ability to advocate for parents and students.

- Through this curriculum social workers can help parents feel empowered to advocate for their children and become academically involved.

- Social workers must be advocates to help remove barriers that prevent students academic success.
References


