INSPIRE

2010

Rationale

Inspire is a program for adolescent girls designed to provide them with a safe, non-judgmental and girl-friendly venue for developing life-skills. The program began when staff of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) noticed that young women were seeking support services in increased numbers. As a result, the AWRC offered a group of girls the opportunity to meet together to talk about their concerns. Inspire began in 2001 and has since grown from one after-school program in Antigonish, to programs offered at four schools in rural parts of Antigonish and Guysborough counties. Feedback from students and school staff alike indicates that the program is both welcomed and needed.

Program Objectives

To provide a safe supportive environment for adolescent girls to access information and resources pertaining to their needs

1. Foster healthy decision making and the development of problem solving skills
2. Provide positive mentoring and role modeling
3. Encourage self-care
4. Facilitate the development of effective communication and social skills
5. Cultivate critical- thinking skills
6. Promote in girls a strong sense of self and an awareness of ones rights and responsibilities.

Program Plan

Deliver a ten session program during the school year. One hour weekly meetings will be held based on topics of interest to the participants, in line with the aforementioned objectives. The program will be somewhat flexible to allow participant input, but maintain clear purpose. Each session will consist of a "check-in" time to allow participants to talk about current issues in their lives, followed by a more focussed information and discussion period. A variety of techniques will be used to assist participant engagement in focussed discussion. These will include crafting, journaling and playing games. Girls will be surveyed midway through the program and again at the end to gather information about changes they may be making in their lives. They will also be provided opportunity to evaluate the facilitators and the program structure.

Success Indicators

Attendance: Regular attendance of participants would indicate that the program has engaged their interest.

Participant Feedback: Participants will be surveyed to determine what, if any, changes they are making in their lives. The survey will provide opportunity for them to evaluate the program format and topics of discussion.

Facilitator Reflections: Facilitators will journal their observations of participants following each session. Verbal information from participants about any changes they have made in their lives will be captured.

Teacher Reflections: Where possible, teachers or guidance counsellors will also be invited to reflect on the changes, if any, they see in students attending the program. This appreciative inquiry will be general in nature to protect the confidentiality of participating students.

Evaluation

Midway through the program and following its completion, participants will be invited to complete a survey. Please see attached evaluation tool.

Answers from the surveys completed by participants will be collated and themes identified. Teachers and/or guidance counsellors will be invited during a brief post-program telephone call to reflect on any benefits they see the program as providing. Facilitators will note their observations of participants and incorporate teacher/counsellor and student evaluations into a final report. This report will reflect on program objectives.

Session Structure

Each session begins with a check-in and a relaxation exercise. Each session is designed to respond to the needs of the group. An Inspire resource binder has been developed to address the most frequently identified issues such as self-esteem, stress, relationships, body image, eating disorders, addictions, and media. dfxccx Each girl is given a journal for her own use and a binder to store any handouts or information she wishes to hold onto.