



PROJECT LIFE

Creating lifelong connections for youth.

A partnership with and funded by VDSS.

Education

Where Am I Going and How Do I Get There?

Participants will brainstorm what they hope to accomplish in the future and discuss the steps needed to get there. Youth will learn how to set goals in order to achieve success.

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Where Am I Going and How Do I Get There?

Age Range	16+
Skill Focus	Youth will focus on the goals they have for their future and learn the steps they need to take to achieve educational success.
Group Size	2+
Time Required	60 minutes
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Flip chart paper/whiteboard and markers- Setting SMART Goals Worksheet- In 8 Years Worksheet
Adapted From	In 8 Years Worksheet: http://www.vaview.vt.edu/68/reality-check/all-about-you

Leader's Notes:

Discussion Questions	20 minutes
Goal Setting	20 minutes
In 8 Years...	15 minutes
Final Thoughts	5 minutes

Discussion Questions (20 minutes)

Explain to youth that we will be learning about post-secondary education and discuss how we can set goals in order to achieve success. Open the workshop by having a brainstorming session with the following questions.

Ask youth: *Why should I further my education after high school or GED?* On flip chart paper, have youth list the pros and cons of furthering their education.

Ask youth: *What motivates you?* List their responses on flip chart paper.

Ask youth: *Why is it important to know what motivates you?* Solicit responses and explain that if we know what motivates us, we can determine where we want to go in life (jobs, college, etc.)

Setting Goals (20 minutes)

Ask youth: *What are some goals you have for your life?* Write responses on a flip chart.

Ask youth: *Why is it important to set goals?*

Pass out the **Setting SMART Goals** handout. Explain that when setting goals, we need to make sure they are S.M.A.R.T. Go through the handout and ask youth if they can come up with examples for each point.

- **Specific** – Goals should be specific rather than vague or unclear. A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished.
 - Example: A general goal would be “get in shape” but a specific goal would be “lose 10 pounds”.
- **Measurable** – Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward attaining your goal.
 - Example: A non-measurable goal would be “have more of a social life”, but a measurable goal would be “join a club at school”.
- **Attainable** – Goals that you establish should be realistic and able to be achieved. It’s important to push yourself, but not set goals that are completely unrealistic.

- Example: A non-attainable goal might be “save \$1,000 this month for a new car” but an attainable goal might be “put aside \$50 per paycheck to start saving for a car”.
- **Relevant** – Goals should meet the needs you currently have in your life. You should set goals that are important to you and relevant in your current stage or situation.
 - Example: A non-relevant goal might be “run a marathon” if you have no desire to do so, but a relevant goal for you might be “attend workout classes at the gym twice a week.”
- **Timely** – Set goals that have a target date. Ask yourself, what can I do six months from now? What can I do six weeks from now? What can I do today?
 - Example: A non-timely goal may be “get a job” but a timely goal would say “get a job by September”.

After going through the handout, have youth get into pairs and discuss an educational goal that they have for their life (i.e. enroll in community college, graduate from 4-year university, attend vocational school, etc.) Have youth help their partner determine if their goal fits within the S.M.A.R.T plan. Have a few youth share their educational goals after the activity.

In 8 Years... (15 minutes)

Give youth about 10 minutes to complete the *In 8 Years Worksheet*. Remind youth to utilize the S.M.A.R.T plan when creating their goals for the future.

After everyone is finished, have youth share what they wrote and discuss the plans they have to get there.

Final Thoughts (5 minutes)

Recap everything you discussed today during the workshop. Encourage youth to seek out a trusted adult who can support them as they set goals and strive for success.

Additional Workshop Options

- Invite a foster care alumnus that has completed a post-secondary education program to talk about their experience with goal-setting and how they achieved success. *Note: If group does not include youth in foster care, you may bring in any college student or someone who has graduated to share their experiences.*
- Invite someone from the local community college to talk about the programs, supports, and resources.
- Have a panel of educators (vocational school, 4-year university or college, community college, etc.)
- Set up a tour at the local community college or university for youth.