SUPPORTING TEENS AGAINST GANG EXPERIENCES (STAGE): A PROGRAM FOR
GANG AFFILIATED HIGH SCHOOL TEENS AND TEENS AT RISK

A graduate project in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Counseling, School Counseling

By

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California State University, Northridge
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my family, a family that keeps on giving. To both of my parents for sacrificing their dreams and goals and being able to provide for our family, to my mom for always supporting me and motivating me, and to my father, for keeping me on my toes and reminding me of my purpose. To Juan, as an older brother thank you for being a strong role model, and to my brother Osbaldo, thank you for being there for our family even when you’re miles away.

Also, I would like to also dedicate this project to CSUN Residential Life Student Housing for letting me grow and work with diverse communities. Also, to the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Northridge Academy High School, Vaughn M.I.T., Van Nuys High School, Project Steps, and Families in Schools. To Alpha Nu Kappa Sorority, thank you for providing a positive impact during my campus life experience. To everyone who has supported me though this lengthy process; all of my friends and coworkers, thank you! To curious George, sharing is caring. Thank you for being a part of my life and journey.

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ABSTRACT

SUPPORTING TEENS AGAINST GANG EXPERIENCES (STAGE): A PROGRAM FOR GANG AFFILIATED HIGH SCHOOL TEENS AND TEENS AT RISK

By
Abigail Escatel

Master of Science in Counseling, School Counseling

The purpose of this project is to create a 14-week-long, small-group counseling program for high school teens who are gang affiliated and/or at risk. Often, high school teens experience trauma related to several risk factors that can lead to developmental issues, non-pursuance of higher education, and disengagement in future career success. The main facilitator of this program will be the high school counselor, who will focus on cognitive behavioral theory and techniques that can help reduce gang affiliation and increase high education. During the program, teens will learn about: gang involvement, trauma and reactions to trauma, the application of the cognitive behavioral model, affective education and social life coping skills. Additionally, a college representative will be part of the program to provide presentations and facilitate discussions to promote higher education and community resources. The end purpose for teens participating in the program is to aid in their creation of a personal narrative centered on their experiences, both emotional and gang-related. Teens will learn the necessary life skills to defeat the gang experience and incorporate student success at a higher rate.
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Influences and experiences such as, family structure, peer behavior, communities, specifically gang involvement, can be detrimental to a youth’s future. Trauma can also manifest itself in many different facets of a person’s life, affecting potential livelihood and success. Ford, Chapman, Hawke, and Albert (2007) state that “youth exposed to traumatic events present not just internalizing problems, such as depression or anxiety, but also externalizing problems like aggression, conduct problems, and oppositional or deviant behavior” (p. 1). Providing teens in high school, especially those involved in gangs, with a safe place to process their emotional issues associated with previous trauma, can help redirect feelings of depression and uselessness. The Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE) program, a program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk, can positively re-direct high school teens to work through their trauma and encourage higher education. Koffman, Ray, Berg, Covington, Albarran, and Vasquez (2009) note a link to traumatic events that result in internalizing behaviors, such as difficulty with thoughts and feelings, and externalizing behaviors, which are negative behaviors directed toward the environment. The STAGE program will use the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help high school teens cope with trauma and address internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

CBT is a common therapeutic approach used by counselors and psychotherapists to help individuals cope with behavioral and psychological issues that may be traumatic (Butler, Chapman, & Beck, 2006). The focus of CBT relies on the idea that the first area of focus should be on thinking (cognition), and is followed by a focus on feelings and manner of conduct. Responses of negative behavior from high school teens can impact
their ability to graduate, maintain a clean criminal record, access higher education, and assimilate into mainstream social groups. In a group counseling setting, CBT can serve to prevent further trauma by enabling each individual youth to break free from cycles of behavior. Group counseling can be an effective treatment method to use with children and adolescents in a school setting (Jacobs, Masson, & Harvill, 2002; Wisner & Norton, 2013). High school teens need the support from the school to have successful learning outcomes and find assistance with any needs such as resources to higher academic achievement, personal development, and assistance in professional growth. In chapter two, information on the importance of successful learning outcomes and effective programing in a school setting will be addressed in depth.

**Statement of Problem**

In order to conceive of and plan an intervention, it is important to understand the reasons why youth join gangs. There are several possible characteristics that can lead to gang affiliation and multiple reasons for teens to engage in gangs. Ryan Miller-Loessi and Nieri (2007) highlight some of these reasons youth to join gangs, which include the need for acceptance, emotional support, peer involvement, a sense of ethnic affiliation and identity. Youth who are gang affiliated tend to experience more risk factors than non-gang youth, indicating a contrast when sharing similar risk factors with delinquent offenders (Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Freng, 2010). Teens who are involved in gangs are exposed to risk factors which include; trauma, an unhealthy family environment and structure, negative peers influences, lack of community support, and interest in criminal activity which can lead to dropping out of high school.
Identifying early stages of underlying issues is the first step to helping deter students from joining or staying in gangs. This is especially pertinent to schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) because of the exceptionally high disproportion in graduation rates. For the 2013-2014 academic year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that Black and Hispanic students had lower graduation rates than Caucasian students: 76% of Hispanic students and 73% of Black students graduate high school as compared to 87% of Caucasian students (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2016). Teens who drop out of school can have several negative risk factors, including unemployment, juvenile justice involvement (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015), and can influence peers who share the same living community or school. Affiliated gang members can influence peripheral members to drop out (Hallcom, n.d.). Despite low graduation rates, there is no association that these rates relate to living in a poor community, however, researchers indicate that living in an affluent community is a factor against dropout rates (California Dropout Research Project, 2015).

School success is critical for youth development and most importantly, incorporating youth success at an early age can eliminate gang involvement. A study involving 9,000 students in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, found that, 8% of the youth surveyed had belonged to a gang at some point between the ages of 12 and 17 (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). This age range is a formative period of time when youth develop social tendencies and experience peer-pressure. Though not every youth who is involved in gangs during this age range is detained or arrested, the likelihood of incarceration is increased through association. Equipping school-site officials with
numerous materials and resources is a starting point to reducing gang-involvement. Having the support of school counselors is imperative to high school teens because it enables motivation for education.

Despite the fact that there are many school-based programs facilitated by school educators that help prevent gang affiliation, the programs generally fail to achieve widespread success in terms of intended results (Fisher, Montgomery, & Garden, 2008). Program failure may be due to gang member misidentification, fidelity, efficacy issues, and/or not enough knowledge behind theoretical guidelines and practices.

A small amount of research has been conducted on dynamics that drive gangs and their structure of growth, yet few gang prevention programs have been evaluated (Howell, 2010). However, programs that show structure and can produce positive outcomes can be reliable means to intervention. There are several examples of such programs. One example is the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) program, which is focused on gang membership, delinquency, and youth violence. The research regarding G.R.E.A.T. indicates a reduction of gang affiliation and improvement of youths’ relationships with law enforcement (Esbensen et al., 2011). Another example is the Juvenile Intervention and Prevention Program (JIPP). JIPP is a gang intervention school based program in Los Angeles, which targets at-risk students using a holistic child approach, in which all aspects of a child are supported and treated (Koffman et al., 2009). The third example is the Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) Program. CBITS focuses on reducing trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); more information on this program and two previously references examples will be offered in chapter two. These programs and other effective intervention and
prevention programs cited in the literature review have influenced the idea for this graduate project and the development of a group counseling program designed for a specific population in a high school setting.

**Purpose of Project**

The proposed project will address how school counselors in a high school setting can be inclusive and can support teens who are gang affiliated or at risk of joining a gang by incorporating a comprehensive, data-driven, school-based, gang intervention program called STAGE (Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences). The aim is to help avoid a rise in drop-out rates and reduce the negative behaviors from past trauma for all teens in the high school setting. STAGE uses the CBT model as a theoretical approach to provide a framework for working with high school youth who are gang affiliated or at risk of gang affiliation. Using the CBT model high school teens will learn techniques that will affectively educate and promote coping skills. Group members will also benefit from increased awareness regarding gang involvement and risk factors that contribute to gang affiliation.

The curriculum is a fourteen-week small-group counseling program which will use the CBT model to promote personal and professional growth. In order to encourage high school teens to pursue higher education, a college representative and a panel discussion with three different California public education systems (California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California) will be incorporated in the STAGE program. The end purpose for group members of the program is to provide a safe space to learn, be interactive in a positive way, and pursue options for higher education. The program STAGE is needed because it will provide support in a
school setting, it will address risk factors that high school gang affiliated or at risk of gang affiliation students experience, it will provide opportunity for participants to work through potential trauma caused by the risk factors, and eliminate and/or reduce gang affiliation.

**Terminology**

**At risk**: A student who is leaving high school before graduating (Slicker & Palmer, 1993), and/or a student who might be making contact with the juvenile justice system (Mboka, 2012).

**Coping**: “A response aimed at diminishing the physical, emotional, and psychological burden that is linked to stressful life events and daily hassles” (Snyder & Dinoff, 1999, p. 5)

**Delinquency**: Law violating behavior committed both by juveniles and adults in or related to groups that are complexly organized (Spergel, 1995).

**Gang**: Any group of two or more individuals that associate with a particular color(s), clothing, number, name, signs, or territory (Short & Hughes, 2006). Generally involved in violent, illegal, and/or criminal activity (The National Youth Gang Center, 2006).

**Intervention**: The action of intervening, ‘stepping in’, or interfering in any affair, so as to affect its course or issue (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, v.8, p.3).

**Risk Factor**: An aspect that increases risk or susceptibility to a condition or other issues (Merriam-Webster, 2014).

**Trauma**: An emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer-term reactions
include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea (Trauma, n.d.).

Summary

Teens who experience gang involvement or who are at risk of gang involvement often experience a complex mix of factors that lead to trauma and create stressors in their daily life. Several programs designed to prevent gang involvement have demonstrated the need of multiple factors such as school support, community support, family support and effective cognitive behavioral intervention in order to be successful. In chapter two, the review of the literature will provide an overview related to understanding gang membership. Topics will include demographics of gang membership, risk factors, and interventions to serve those teens in a high school setting. Chapter two will also examine other gang prevention and trauma reducing programs for the purpose of identifying ineffective and effective traits of programs. The STAGE program will incorporate a data-driven, school-based, group counseling approach as an effective means to see high school teens who are gang affiliated and/or at risk succeed in the creating change and ensuring effective options for their future success.
Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Some individuals join gangs as adolescents, while others join as young adults. The 2012 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) found active youth gangs in more than 2,300 cities and 550 other jurisdictions served by county law enforcement (Egley & Major, 2004). This chapter will focus on high school teens affiliated with gang membership and/or who are at risk of joining a gang, and how they can benefit from a comprehensive prevention program. Evidence from this chapter will support the argument that high school teens who are gang affiliated or are at risk of gang affiliation, need school support to receive help with potential trauma. High school teens need the support early on to reduce dropout rates in the future. This chapter will begin with information about the history and demographics of gangs, followed by a review of risk factors leading to gang affiliation. The chapter will conclude with a review of existing program models, followed by discussion on the efficacy of these models.

History of Gangs

Howell and Moore (2010) acclaimed major differences in modern-day street gangs than those formed prior to the 19th century. There are several differences in which gang members are engaged, making modern-day gangs partake in planned gang activity, such as vandalism, and a significant level of illegal activity (Howell, 2010). Gangs were formed in four regions of the United States: The Northeast, Midwest, West, and the South regions. Gang activity was initially reported in the Northeast region. In the Northeast, developing gangs were not recorded as members engaging in criminal activity but as a battle for local turf (Howell, Egley, Tita, & Griffiths, 2011). According to Howell and Moore (2010), occupation of earlier street gangs of New York: included bouncers in
saloons, butchers, carpenters, sail-makers and shipbuilders, and other affiliated individuals who defended their territory. Gangs in the Western region were initially formed by members who migrated from Mexico along El Paso and into cities like Albuquerque and Los Angeles. Post World War II, southern Blacks migrated to the Western region and formed social clubs to resist against White violence. An empowering Black identity was formed after the civil rights movement, however, street gangs still emerged, such as the Crips and Bloods (Howell & Moore, 2010). In the 1970s, California reported gangs in their populated areas. Los Angeles was home to the MS-13 and 18th Street, two large shifting gangs (Howell et al., 2011). Initially, the Southern region lacked reporting gang issues, however, later, the South was the leading region with the number of cities reporting gang issues increasing by 32% (Howell et al., 2011). During this time, activity from gangs was reported in all sections of the state, including, 22% of suburban and 16% of rural counties, 15% of smaller cities, and 13% of large cities (Howell, 2010). Conclusively, gangs were mostly dominated by adults in the Northeast and Midwest region while in the Western region, youth were in control (Howell & Moore, 2010).

**Gang Membership**

The reasons for joining a gang at an early age vary, and include material reasons, recreation, a place of refuge and camouflage, physical protection, a time to resist, and commitment to community (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2001). In relation to material reasons, many teens think that by joining a gang it increases the chances of making money and creates a steady source of income to assist their families (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2001). Beside
families, gangs can also provide entertainment for their members. Members of gangs can provide the opportunity for youth to socialize among peers during parties and hanging out (Howell, 2010). Gangs also provide protection to their members by covering the member’s identity. Gang members have the notion of physical protection as a reason of joining a gang because of other gang rivalries. Many gang members, reported that gangs existed in high school (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2001). Gang members want a better living condition, by joining a gang, members have an opportunity to create their own pathway and have different opportunities than their parents (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2001). Gang membership is also commonly seen in school settings. The following studies will address details in relation to students and gang membership.

**Research studies related to gang membership.** Estrada (2011) conducted three research studies that focused on how school dynamics contribute to gang membership, school violence perpetration, and school victimization. Participants of the study included a statewide representative sample of students from middle schools and high schools in California. The studies separately addressed will include details such as purpose, sample size, research questions and/or methods, and results.

**Study one.** Estrada (2011) examined a large-scale statewide sample, which explored gang membership in 10,000 schools in the State of California. He examined reports at the country and regional level (Estrada, 2011). For the study, comparisons between gang and non-gang members were addressed in relation to specific characteristics; such as geographic location, gender, ethnicity, grade level, and school violence (Estrada, 2011). Research questions included: (1) What are common rates of gang membership in schools across different counties and regions by grade level in CA?,
(2) How do gang members and non-gang members in school differ based on the specific characteristics?, and (3) What factors including contextual and school, significantly predict gang membership? (Estrada, 2011).

The results for the first question identified Los Angeles as an urban county, and Estrada further identified the rates of gang membership in schools in Los Angeles county range from 7.4% to 9.9% (Estrada, 2011). Overall, the county rates of gang membership and region rates identified by grade level indicate that students have a higher chance of gang membership in 9th grade (2.9%) and 11th grade (2.1%) (Estrada, 2011).

Results for the second research question related to the characteristic differences of gang members showed that gang members in schools were more likely to be victims of school violence behaviors than non-gang members (Estrada, 2011). Gang members were identified as students who take weapons to school, have inappropriate comments made toward them, have mean rumors and lies spread about them, engage in physical altercations, and have experienced all of the above in one or more instances in the past year (Estrada, 2011). According to the results gang members and non-gang members at school both have been found to carry a gun, knife, or other weapon (members 56.3%) (non-gang members 31% ), had sexual jokes made about them, had negative comments or gestures made toward them (members 56.4%) (non-gang members 44.3%), had mean rumors or lies spread about them (members 52%) (non-members 42.1%), had been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked by someone (members 45.1%) (non-gang members 32%) (Estrada, 2011). While it is clear that gang members and non-gang members share certain characteristics, it is clear from the results presented above that
gang members have higher percentages of the above characteristics when compared to non-gang members.

Lastly, results of the third question related to factors that predict gang membership showed school factors that can predict gang membership. The factors were: school violence perpetration, school violence victimization, and discrimination-motivated victimization (Estrada, 2011). This is relevant because the presence of these factors can be linked to student dropout rates (Estrada, 2011), and warrants further consideration of how to minimize the number of gang affiliated teens by implementing school programs. This will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

**Study two.** The second study examined how school risk and protective factors for middle school students mediate the effects of gang membership on school violence behaviors (Estrada, 2011). The sample size included 149,703 California middle school students (Estrada, 2011). Methods used for the study included the large scale California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), which is a survey that gathers personal data, health related behaviors, substance use, violence behaviors, and school safety (Estrada, 2011). Parental consent was gathered prior to the CHKS. Results of the survey found that 9.5% of students reported that they were members of a gang (Estrada, 2011).

**Study three.** The final study also used the same instrument, the CHKS, except for this study, the focus was on high school students. The sample size consisted of 272,863 high school students in California (Estrada, 2011). After examination of the survey data, Estrada found that 8.2% of students reported that they were members of a gang (Estrada, 2011). There is a slightly higher percentage of students reporting gang affiliation in middle school (9.5%) compared to high school (8.2%), yet it may be more appropriate to
aim interventions at high school teens, because of the type of victimization that occurs at this level, e.g., carrying weapons, the level of physical fights, and property damage.

Gang Demographics

High school teens face the risk of joining a gang at any age, but are more at risk around the age of fifteen. The vulnerability at the age of fifteen is increased due to the transition into high school (Hill et al., 2001). The average stereotype of the American gang member continues to be of a young male from a racial/ethnic minority group who lives in a deteriorating urban area (Esbensen & Tusinski, 2007). According to Esbensen, Osgood, Peterson, Taylor, and Carson (2013), by the late 1950s, gangs and gang members were increasingly described as African American, Puerto Rican, and/or Hispanic to the extent that by the 21st century, the gang problem was viewed essentially as a racial/ethnic minority problem. In addition, gang formation includes gender as a main factor. It has been known that men are the ones who join gangs, but an increase in female gang affiliation has recently been discovered (Esbensen, 2000), though males are 1.5 to 2 times more likely than females to join a gang (Estrada, Gilbreath, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2013). Gangs typically target low-income communities as a place to recruit members, and young members who are gang affiliated, are mainly recruited from low-income areas and belong to an ethnic minority group (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2001). Gang affiliated teens or those who are at risk of becoming gang affiliated have commonalities of experienced risk factors.

Risk Factors Related to Gang Involvement

When individuals lack the support of social organizations, this sense of alienation from their environments and can result in gang affiliation (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001).
Alienation can create a cycle of behavior problems and the outbreak of risk factors which determine entry into a gang. Identifying the possible risk factors that impact gang affiliation will aid educators in establishing a successful prevention and intervention plan for the population in need. Applying prevention and intervention services to individuals before they enter a gang can produce a positive influence on school involvement (Melde, Gavazzi, McGarrell, & Bynum, 2011), and provide the support which may be lacking in the community or through social groups. In order to provide services to high school teens who are gang affiliated or at risk of gang affiliation, it is important to learn about factors that can contribute to their affiliation, such as trauma, family, peers, communities, and dropout rates.

**Trauma risk factors.** Trauma can occur early in childhood, causing important aspects of the brain and personality development to be disrupted. When a child is exposed to trauma, the developing brain begins to feel the hyper-aroused state which distracts the brain from knowing what is damaging, unsafe, and unhealthy, and the ability to recognize these things is an unfamiliar feeling to a child who has experienced trauma (Shannon & Heckman, 2007). According to Ford, Chapman, Hawke, and Albert (2007), traumatized youth can be from any ethnic background, however those individuals who experience early life trauma often come from environments in which they are subject to more stress and have fewer resources to help them develop than children who are not exposed to early trauma. In many areas of Los Angeles, Latino and African American students have to cope with their traumatic experiences either earlier in life or more frequently (Collins et al., 2000). African-American and Latino/Hispanic teens are also disproportionately placed in the juvenile system, and are more likely than White youth to
report exposure to traumatic stressors (Ford et al., 2007). The majority of the trauma experienced by African-American and Latino/Hispanic students is not addressed with treatment and these students have a difficult time coping at home and in school.

Trauma is associated with aggressive behavior, lower academic performances, lower levels of social competence, and negative mental health outcomes, including posttraumatic stress symptoms such as emotional numbing and increased arousal (Siegfried, Ko, & Kelly, 2004). There are also other risk factors that result from trauma including juvenile delinquency. Results from The National Youth Gang Survey indicate that 40% of gang members in the United States are juveniles (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2014).

Exposure to trauma from family and community violence places individuals at risk of problems in their behavior, emotionally, and academically.

There are interventions that can aid individuals with trauma, such as cognitive behavior therapy, which will be discussed later in this chapter. There are also a number of trauma-focused screening and interventions that can be used to help youth deal with past trauma, recognize its current impact and teach ways to manage or overcome their emotional and behavioral problems (Ford et al., 2007).

**Family risk factors.** The involvement of family, specifically the role of parents is an essential factor in promoting child development (Loeber and Farrington, 2001). There are many risk factors linked with the family environment that can encourage high teens to join a gang, like the decline of the family’s capability to bond (Howell, 2010; Melde et al., 2011; O’Brien et al, 2013), which may contribute to poor parental skills and lack of supervision. Also related to family structure, when children have various caregivers, or the child lives in a single parent household, this can result in gang affiliation (Howell,
2010; O’Brien et al., 2013). At times, the loss of a parent and/or role model from a traumatic experience, such as death or separation, is a main risk factor (Alleyne & Wood, 2010). Violence can also deter individuals from separating from their families and finding their own, or violence can be experienced in the home, such as when a child experiences abuse and/or neglect (Howell, 2010; Wyrick & Howell, 2004). The family’s involvement in criminal activity also plays a role in gang affiliation. Every high school teen experiences different family circumstances, and many teens search for unity and companionship to replace their torn and absent family (Akiyama, 2012).

A study by Rodriguez-Almendarez (2013) was conducted to describe the experience of single mothers of their gang affiliated sons reentry into life after release from a Texas Juvenile Justice Department state facility. A family systems approach/theoretical framework was used for the study and the sample size was between five and 25 participants. The purpose of the study was to examine seven characteristics that are currently associated with incarcerated youth. The seven characteristics are: raised in a single parent household, number of felony offenses, active gang membership, placements outside of their families and community, low IQ, family history of criminal behavior, and diagnosis of a serious mental health issue (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). Three specific methods were used and were available in languages other than English for the purpose of accommodating the native language of participants. The methods included: (a) the semi structured interview, (b) a demographic questionnaire, and (c) a questionnaire with short answer questions (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). The research questions were: what are the experiences of a single Hispanic mothers raising gang affiliated male sons?, What is the understanding of single Hispanic mothers’ in relation to
social agencies/services following their males sons gang affiliation?, and How does the single Hispanic mother prepare her other children for the returning sibling? (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013).

The results of the study included the identification of five themes, which were: (1) Hispanic single mothers were required to work to support the family, which left little time for family bonding; (2) relationships with their sons were strained as a result; (3) the mothers had knowledge of gang involvement, yet were unable to intervene (4) characteristics of their sons, and (5) parenting skills played a common response among participants (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). For the first theme, it pertained to single mothers’ needing to support their families due to absent fathers (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). The second theme included relationships between mother and son prior to incarceration, post incarceration, and also detailed participant mothers’ preference to have their son’s incarcerated (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). Each mother approved of their son’s incarceration for the sake of their son’s safety (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). Related to theme three, the knowledge of gang involvement between mothers mainly focused on feelings experienced by mothers upon learning about their son’s gang membership and involvement (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). Specific sets of characteristics were addressed based on the forth theme. The characteristics identified included: the age in which they began to display problems, school difficulties, tattoos, little to no contact with biological fathers, drug usage, and feelings of gang family was more important than their biological family (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013). In the fifth and final theme, parents shared the efforts they have taken to guide their children away
from gangs, while seeking resources, such as afterschool programs and relocating neighborhoods (Rodriguez-Almendarez, 2013).

**Peer risk factors.** High school teens are developing into adulthood, and the formation of peer groups are developmentally important (Lachman et al., 2013; Howell, 2010). The strongest correlation for gang affiliation is gang involved peers (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Esbensen, 2000; Melde et al., 2011; O’Brien et al., 2013; Wyrick & Howell, 2004), which is not surprising, since it has been established previously that teens often search for unity and companionship if their family unit is torn or absent (Akiyama, 2012), and that involvement with family is needed for their development (include citation here – taken from the beginning of family risk factors). Teens in high school are developing their identity and experiencing social networks. It is common that individuals will search and find others who have similar interest. Once a high school teen finds a peer group and starts integrating with them, they tend to establish a sense of status in the group (Bouchard & Spindler, 2010). Teens can adopt and comply with the behaviors of their peers, which create a strong group identity (Lachman et al., 2013), which can cause the formation of peer groups to be a positive or a negative experience. At times, peers can use negative strategies to introduce gang affiliation, such as peer pressure (Alleyne & Wood, 2010), bribe with money, thrashing, and murder as an extreme measure (Akiyama, 2012). Finally, this involvement with delinquent peers and gang affiliated peers is linked to antisocial behaviors, delinquent activity, violence, and gang affiliation (Melde et al., 2011; O’Brien et al., 2013). In relation to peers being an influence, the difference between non-gang affiliated and gang affiliated individuals is that non-gang affiliated
individuals control their social groups, whereas gang affiliated individuals are controlled by their social group (Wood & Alleyne, 2010).

**Community risk factors.** When social structures like family and schools fail youth, communities may provide a supportive environment for gang affiliated members (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Gang-infested communities also offer an environment for high crime, by allowing space for gangs to have the opportunity to use drugs and firearms within the community (Howell, 2010). In some cases, a low level of connection and unification within the communities can create unsafe feelings within teens and this may influence teens to join gangs for protection from threats made by local gangs in the neighborhood (Alleyne & Wood, 2010). Youth may also feel supported through gang affiliation, by maintaining a position of dominance in a displeased community (Rizzo, 2003; Short & Hughes, 2006). If the neighborhood is run by gangs, the relationships and relatability that teens have within the communities can make them feel obligated to join a gang and receive support from members who have also joined a gang (Alleyne & Wood, 2010).

**Dropout rates.** Many gang members who join gangs in their teens are more likely to leave school and focus on other activities that are crime related. Teens who join gangs are prone to criminal activities and may drop out of school before 12th grade (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Catldi, Chapman, Kewal Ramani & Laird, (2008) found that approximately 3.5 million people from the ages of 16-24 are without a high school diploma. The risk factors of dropping out vary and teens who are gang affiliated are at serious risk for dropping out of high school. In California graduation rates are a concern, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) reported a 72.2% graduation rate for
the 2014-2015 school year (CALPADS, 2016). Students who are not graduating have different circumstances, specifically those who are gang affiliated. High school teens who fail to complete school have more difficult time finding employment, difficulty returning to school for a second time, and rely on public assistance (Henry et al., 2012). Another barrier that can occur when dropping out of high school is an increase in engagement in criminal activities, which can lead to incarceration (Rumberger, 2011). For these reasons it is important to ensure students remain in school.

**Key Components to Intervention**

Based on the previously referenced information, it is clear that gang affiliation is still a current issue and needs to be addressed in a school setting. The school provides a safe space because of the support of educators, which makes the school setting a safe place where students can be approached in a positive way. In order to ensure and meet the needs of all students, school counselors can use an evidence-based curriculum and intervention that uses the data-driven decision making process (Duarte & Hatch, 2014). Providing school-based programs for high school teens can help increase an interest in school. Counseling groups that develop a sense of unity also contribute to a higher rate of attendance, participation, and support based on relationships formed by group members (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). These are all components of intervention, but most importantly, CBT, strategies of CBT, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), family support, and awareness of higher education can be used to help facilitate an effective prevention program for gang affiliated teens and/or teens who are at risk of gang affiliation.
**Data-driven programs.** In order to have a successful, comprehensive gang affiliated or at risk prevention program, data needs to be retrieved from other sources and incorporated into skilled practices. Data-driven practices have become increasingly necessary in the profession of school counseling (ASCA, 2012; Carey, Dimmitt, Hatch, Lapan, & Whiston, 2008; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The need to have updated data is critical because as part of the school standards, staff who work for the school rely on data to improve successful outcomes. The ASCA’s professional competencies, position statements, ethical guidelines, and the ASCA National Model call for school counseling programs to use data to systematically identify and address the needs of students for the purposes of accountability and program improvement (ASCA, 2012). Having school counselors facilitate a gang prevention program can be profitable to the schools and communities in need. School counselors are encouraged to implement research-based interventions and accurately measure the impact of their activities on the students they serve (Carey et al., 2008; Johnson, 2002; Poynton & Carey, 2006). As well as collecting and analyzing data, sharing positive results with school administrators, school district officials, and other school stakeholders, it is critical to accumulate support for school counseling programs (Hatch, 2014; Sink, 2009). Meeting the needs of students in a school setting is absolutely necessary for student development.

**American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Standards**

It has been established that schools are a natural setting for interventions for students to occur. School counselors play a gargantuan role when it comes to school success and supporting the students. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2012) is used and followed by school counselors to focus on
and address standards such as, academic development, personal/social development, and career development in students. School counselors also use the four themes of ASCA, which are, leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change (ASCA, 2012). ASCA developed guidelines on how school counseling services can be effectively used in order to meet the needs of students. Most importantly, ASCA standards acknowledge the diversity within schools and communities. The 2012 ASCA National Model States that “staff and school counselors value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in our societies and communities” (ASCA, 2012, p. 1). In order to promote and serve students in the community, learning the culture of the campus is necessary. The U.S. Department of Education encourages schools to institute discipline and safety policies to “improve the culture and climate of their campuses” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 2). Overall, school counselors can use these standards as well as the four themes of the ASCA, which are leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change (ASCA, 2012) to create effective prevention and intervention programs to guide and assist students in need, including those who are gang affiliated or who are at risk of gang affiliation.

**School-based programs.** The cooperation of schools can foster a safe and healthy learning environment, while connecting with community programs (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005). There are several effective strategies to run a school-based program and safety is an imperative component. A strategy that can be recommended for preventing gang activity is training school professionals, including educators, the school administration, school counselors, and most importantly training students to do what?. The school administration team should also make an effort to provide training in areas that focus on
recognizing the gang culture, including signs of gang involvement, gang colors, gang dress codes, and gang symbols. Interventions should be tailored to reflect the needs and character of the school and the community, including sensitivity to the language and culture of the students being served (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005).

Forster, Grigsby, Unger, and Sussman (2015) conducted a study focused on the association of neighborhood violence exposure, gang associations, and social self-control in order to implicate prevention and intervention programs. The study involved 7th and 8th graders attending middle schools in South Los Angeles, California. The final study sample included 87 males and 77 females. Students who participated in the study were identified as Hispanic and African American with high levels of violent crime. The study assessed demographics, substance abuse, family and peer gang associations, social self-control, self-reported aggression, and neighborhood violence exposure (Forster et al., 2015). Based on the findings, it was concluded that a focus on the effectiveness of gender specific programs is needed, and that school-based programs can address trauma linked to neighborhood violence. Additionally, teaching students skills to improve social unity and resilience can reduce aggressive behavior on and off campus (Forster et al., 2015). This can be addressed by implementing school-based programs that disrupt bad behavior patterns and provide problem behavior development and expression (Forster et al., 2015). Lastly, schools that have a high number of crime and gang activity can address the needs of their students, by specifically working on techniques that reduce tension in social experiences, in order to improve success in social settings and discourage future gang affiliation (Forster et al., 2015).
**Group counseling.** Group counseling is used to promote successful outcomes and is used as an effective treatment for children and adolescents in a school setting (Jacobs, Masson, & Harvill, 2002; Wisner & Norton, 2013). Corey and Corey (2014) share that counseling groups can occur in a variety of environments, are short-term, are cost effective, and address the needs of many at the same time. Counseling groups can also create comfort by allowing participants to share with others about similar issues and create a path towards change (Corey & Corey, 2014).

A study conducted by Wisner and Norton (2013) focused on addressing negative social, emotional, and academic risk factors in adolescent students through group counseling. The study included students from alternative high schools, and included 28 students, 12 males and 16 females. Ages of the participants ranged from 15 to 19. The students were identified as all Caucasian, with one bi-racial student who was African American and Caucasian. The eight-week school-based counseling group, included mindfulness meditation, a way of meditation that regulates emotions and advances wellness. Normally, counseling groups have a lot of movement. However, in this study, using different styles for activities can address behavior, thought process, and emotions. According on the findings of the study, it showed that students had more benefits than challenges practicing mindfulness meditation and behavioral and emotional strength increased (Wisner & Norton, 2013). Also suggested in this study, was the use of mindfulness meditation to potentially improve psychosocial, cognitive, and behavioral strengths (Wisner & Norton, 2013). Wisner and Norton (2013) expressed that school-based group counseling is a common experience for young people who are structured to a school setting and view working in groups as a normal practice.
Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps to improve the well-being, functioning, feelings, and behaviors linked with psychological disturbance (Dobson & Dozois, 2001). The pioneer of CBT was Dr. Albert Ellis in the early 1960s based on his research related to rational emotive behavior therapy in 1958 (Dobson & Dozois, 2001). A main principle of CBT is that improper rationale can lead to feelings and behaviors that are unsuitable in the situation in which they exist (Squires & Caddick, 2012). Ultimately, the goal of CBT is to have the individual reflect on their thinking and consider their feelings and behaviors (Squires & Caddick, 2012). According to Mennuti, Christner, and Freeman (2012), CBT has two perspectives, the cognitive and the behavioral, both are combined in order to increase an understanding of the issue and allow development for intervention. Using cognitive behavior therapy as an intervention can help identify traumatic stress related disorders among high school teens.

Cognitive Behavior Strategies

**Psychoeducation.** CBT is used by psychotherapists and counselors to help individuals cope with issues such as: anxiety, depression, and trauma (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006). There are different components to CBT, the most frequently used is psychoeducation (Ong & Caron, 2008). The purpose of psychoeducation is to provide credible information. School counselors can use, “psychoeducational groups [to] focus on developing member’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills through a structural set procedure within and across group meetings” (Corey et al., 2014, p. 8).

**Coping strategies.** Coping strategies can increase resilience in trauma (Bonnano, 2005), and focusing on cognitive behavioral strategies such as self-talk can be effective
interventions for depression (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006). Training in social and cognitive behavior strategies, attention focusing, social-skills training, and personal guidance have all been linked to improved outcomes for students at risk (Lipsey, Wilson, & Noser, 2007). Mindfulness strategies have also been linked to self-efficacy, resilience, and an increase in academic achievement (Bandura, 1997; Benard, 2004; Butler et al., 2006; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

**Reasons for Intervention**

Once a child enters the school system, factors that are school related have an influence on the development of the individual. Although most risk factors associated with gang involvement are not easily changeable, school factors are within the control of professionals trained to promote the learning and behavioral excellence of diverse youth (Sharkey, Shekhtmeyster, Chavez-Lopez, Norris, & Sass, 2010). In light of the previous discussion regarding the ability and responsibility of schools to create positive change, interventions need to be in place so that teens in a high school setting can feel supported and increase future success. Thus this section will address ineffective and effective programs in order to isolate what works with this population and provide support for the STAGE program.

**Traits of ineffective programs.** Affiliated gang members are particularly resistant to intervention, and gang interventions are equally resistant to evaluation. Gang intervention programs are intended to be successful, however; in many cases the programs fail. In considering several police gang interventions, Decker (2003) mentioned that the lack of basic knowledge, of the types of violence youth are engaged in can make it hard for police, legislators, researchers, and policymakers to evaluate and set
interventions. Police officers’ lack of knowledge in a population that needs support can discourage individuals from having a trusting relationship. Researchers have indicated that primary prevention generally lacks the intensity and focus to address the needs of youth who are high-risk (Esbensen, Osgood, Peterson, Taylor, & Carson, 2013). Several gang prevention programs have occurred in recent years in an effort to try to reduce gang violence, and in some cases, prevention and intervention programs can provide sanctions. Harsh sanctions for gang-affiliated members can decrease the chances of the youth being a part of a program.

**Traits of effective programs.** Recently a report from the National Institute of Justice expressed the need to strengthen gang prevention strategies across the United States (Simon, Ritter, & Mahendra, 2013), likely because there has been an increase in the number of teens who are gang affiliated. Howell (2003) estimates a 35% increase in the number of youth street gangs nationwide between 2002 and 2010. Effective gang prevention programs are not common and researchers have demonstrated that having community involved in gang reduction can be successful. Leap (2013) also stresses the importance of community-based strategies, arguing that gangs are thought of as a group separate from their community. McGloin (2007), also suggested that community improvement should be a major focus of future gang interventions. On the other hand, peer involvement is essential for teens in a high school setting to participate in a gang prevention program. The demonstration of peer influences can decrease the aggression of youth in structured group settings (Boxer, Guerra, Huesmann, & Morales, 2005). McGloin (2007) elaborated that successful gang interventions take into consideration the social interactions and group processes of gangs, which was evidenced by Placido,
Simon, Witte, Gu, and Wong (2006), who found that using cognitive behavioral treatment with incarcerated gang members was effective because the intervention was fitted to the individual needs and responsiveness level of these individuals.

**Supported Programs**

**Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.).** G.R.E.A.T. is a delinquent-prevention gang program given by law enforcement officers in a school setting (Esbensen et al., 2011). Originally the program was designed by Phoenix law enforcement in 1991, in order to improve issues regarding gang life. The curriculum initially consisted of 8 lessons, and was changed to 13 lessons to cater to youth using life skills in order to prevent gang behavior. Specifically, the two determining goals of the new lesson plan were to 1) Avoid gang membership, violence, and criminal activity, and 2) focus on developing positive relationships with law enforcement. The evaluation of the program included a longitudinal study designed to be used in participating schools and classrooms, which were randomly assigned. The students who participated in the program had to complete face-to-face counseling and group administered questionnaires that would follow students’ school experience from 6th grade through 11th grade, excluding 9th grade. The results indicated that students who were in G.R.E.A.T. programs reported positive attitudes about police and resistance of peer pressure. It was also determined that students who completed the G.R.E.A.T. program reported significantly lower levels of gang affiliation and self-reported delinquency (Ramsey, Rust, & Sobel, 2003).

**Juvenile Intervention and Prevention Program (JIPP).** JIPP is a gang intervention and prevention school-based program focused in Los Angeles, California,
engages at-risk students using a systemic whole child approach, in which the child is both treated and supported (Koffman et al., 2009). JIPP instills in students’ academic performance, family interaction, and positive behavior. The program targets three macro areas, which include, family, education and community. Based on the three macro areas, four micro interventions are considered: academic, bio-behavioral, family system support, and psychosocial-emotional (Koffman et al., 2009). JIPP had two goals which consisted of a micro and a macro goal. The micro goal centers on behavioral referrals, dropout rates, gang activity, reducing suspensions, and school truancies (Koffman et al., 2009). The macro goal is to provide supportive interventions to help students succeed in community, home, and school. In the initial two years, JIPP has served more than 300 students. Most of the students that JIPP serves are high school students, but middle school students are also involved. There are four curriculum stages to the JIPP program which are: resistance, empowerment, leadership, and parenting (Koffman et al., 2009). The parenting stage of the program equips parents with psychoeducational classes.

JIPP conducted a study with alliances between LAUSD, Local District 4, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Rampart Divisions, Families in Schools; and California State University, Los Angeles to address variable that affect academic, social, and mental outcomes among students who exhibit delinquent or potential delinquent behavior (Koffman et al., 2009). The study also focused on the student’s behavior in a community setting in order to characterize the collective trauma. Students were selected by deans, administrators, and counselors at the Belmont High School (Koffman et al., 2009). The community of Belmont High School housed, gangs that have a negative effect to the community (Koffman et al., 2009). The study consisted of 387 students, ninety-one
percent were Latino students with some African American students, and seventy one percent of participants were males (Koffman et al., 2009). Measured outcomes of the study included, physical activities, LAUSD officers were trained on how to communicate with students. The research results indicated that emotional problems, such as depression, decreased after the completion of the program. Further, researchers found that suspension rates for disruptive or deviant behavior decreased by 70% (Koffman et al., 2009) for students after participating in the program.

**Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS).** CBITS is a school-based program that uses a skills-building early intervention approach to reduce traumatic experiences and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms (Jaycox, 2004). The program is designed for ages 11 through 15. Facilitators of the program can be social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, or school counselors preferably with mental health intervention experience (Jaycox, 2014). The program specifically trains in CBT with trauma survivors. The program consists of three curriculum sections: (a) ten group sessions and one individual session, (b) two parent education sessions, and (c) one teacher education session. The program was developed in collaboration with LAUSD. Two studies were conducted on the intervention model. In the first study, 879 students were screened, and 198 students participated. All of the students were Spanish-speaking, first time immigrants to the U.S., and participant ages ranged from eight to 15. Results from the first study included an improvement in PTSD and depressive symptoms. The initial study had a three-month follow-up, adjusting for relevant control variables (Kataoka et al., 2003). In the second study 769 students were screened, and 126 participated. The ages involved in the second study were between the
ages of 10 and 12. The second study results included a self-reported decrease in symptoms of PTSD and depression, as well as a decrease in parent-reported behavioral and emotional problems (Stein et al., 2003).

Summary

High school teens are exposed to many situations in life at an early age, including gang affiliation. In the United States, teens encounter negative experiences daily that can shape their futures. For the most part, teens develop their identities with their families, communities, and schools. Families and communities are uncontrolled and teens have to figure out a way of maintaining a sense of responsibility while trying to avoid harsh experiences that can include engagement with law enforcement. On the other hand, schools have standards in place to support the needs of all students and to help them reach future success. Effective prevention and intervention programs can also aid students to overcome gang affiliation and other negative risk factors that they might face. Having an effective program can meet the needs of the students and provide a safe and supported environment to promote change, while also providing useful resources. There are many ways to implement a program that can help teens who are gang affiliated or at risk of becoming gang affiliated. In this chapter, examination of the efficacy of interventions has been offered, along with current programs that have informed the STAGE program, a proposed data-driven, school-based, group counseling approach that is designed to help gang affiliated teens and/or teens at risk of gang affiliation succeed in the creation of change and ensuring effective options for their future success. A review of the proposed project will be provided in the next chapter, and will address the
development of the proposed project, the intended audience, personal qualifications of facilitators, among other areas.
Chapter III: PROJECT AUDIENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS

The Supporting Teens Against Gang Experience (STAGE) program is a fourteen-week small group counseling program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk of gang affiliation. The main facilitators of the program will be a high school counselor with the help of other counselors and/or school counseling interns in a graduate program. The theoretical orientation for STAGE will focus on cognitive behavioral therapy to apply coping techniques for group members. During the program, teens will learn about social life coping skills using personal and professional growth activities. Expectations of group members in the program are to support one another by being respectful, taking ownership and responsibility of the program, applying information and participating, and to empowering each other. An additional component to the program is to promote options for higher education. The program will incorporate a college representative as well as host a panel discussion with representatives from three different California college education systems. The outcome of the program is to not only promote higher education and opportunities but also, to have group members create their story based on their traumatic experiences.

Development of Project

The inspiration for this project comes from my experience as a school counselor intern at two schools, an urban middle school in Pacoima and a high school in Van Nuys. During my experience I encountered students and families who at some point were gang affiliated. Daily I observed deviant behavior that included yelling, physically fighting, stealing, and profanity used among students and family members. Initially, I was challenged by the population of gang members in both schools and decided to learn about
gang culture as well as learn how the schools tackled gang affiliation. At the middle school in Pacoima, I learned about an outside gang prevention program called Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD). GRYD, was used as a resource at the school in Pacoima and many students and families were involved. Several students would seek GRYD services at the school setting, which included individual counseling for ten minutes with a student. At the school in Van Nuys, school counselors worked with the pupil services and attendance counselor, who is in charge of home visits when students are not attending school, referring students to alternative schools if the student is not on track to graduate, and providing crisis assessments. This made me realize the need to have a program designed for students who are gang affiliated and/or at risk of gang affiliation, because many of the students at the schools where I interned did not attend school and instead dedicated their time hanging out on the streets. Once I become a school counselor, I am determined to be a resourceful school counselor and implement programs that best suit the needs of the student population.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for the STAGE program are high school teens who are male or female, age 14-18, identify as gang-affiliated or nonaffiliated but at-risk of joining. Youth who are California residents and have completed middle school can be a part of the program. Gangs exists in many regions and since the program STAGE will be a data-driven program based on the state of California, student who reside in California will be qualified. Students who have lived in California for over three years are qualified for the program. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend, but it is not required. Ideally, if
a high school teen shows signs of gang-related activity it would be best to have them initiate the program to provide support.

**Personal Qualifications**

In order for a site to develop a STAGE program for students, two adults will need to qualify to provide the intended services. The facilitators of the program will be titled support staff. The facilitators should hold a Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) credential in School Counseling and a master’s degree or meet the eligibility requirements. Eligibility can mean graduate student interns who are currently working towards a master’s degree in counseling, psychology, or social work, and who are under the supervision of school counselor at the site and a university faculty member. Support Staff will need to be able to relate to the students, meaning that at least one of the support staff should have experience working with gang affiliated members. Reaching out to programs that work with gang affiliated members can serve as a way to provide support to one another and to recruit a support staff that can have the experience of working with gang affiliated youth. Support staff of the STAGE program must be able to dedicate an hour and a half, once a week.

**Environment and Equipment**

The environment for the STAGE program needs to be a room that has space for twelve people during group meetings. The room has to have available tables and chairs so that group members can comfortably sit and be able to write when needed. During certain meeting times the need of a projector and pull down screen will be necessary in order to display a video and potential PowerPoint presentations from presenters who will be
providing awareness on higher education. Printout of the handouts and writing utensils would be needed so that high school teens can take notes.

Formative Evaluation

The project incorporates an evaluation questionnaire completed by three high school counselors, and this feedback will be reviewed in the next chapter. A committee chair will review, consult, and evaluate the information from this project and also discuss what would be beneficial for youth, parents, and school administration.

Project Outline

The title of this program is called STAGE: Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences. STAGE targets a specific population and meetings are intended to be in a group setting. It incorporates the CBT model, personal, and professional growth. Also, STAGE uses icebreakers to enhance a sense of group unity and has topics such as: learning about gang involvement, positive self-talk, SMART goals, communication styles, mapping the community, learning about empathy and sympathy, email etiquette, and having college representatives to the program that can increase students interest in higher education. Most importantly, the title of the program is STAGE because at the end of the program, students will be given the opportunity to have a platform in which they can express themselves and share a traumatic experience—which may relate to their gang affiliation, but this is not required—that they have worked through. STAGE uses the CBT model to focus the lens on work with gang-affiliated high school teens and/or teens at risk of gang affiliation and gives them a space to learn, be interactive in a positive way, and pursue higher education.

Week One: Introduction

- Welcome STAGE group members and discuss confidentiality
• STAGE group members will be provided with an overview and expectations of the program
• STAGE group members will participate in an ice breaker
• Assist STAGE group members to create their Community Standards
• STAGE group members will complete a pre-survey

Week Two: Gang Involvement
• STAGE group members will participate in an ice breaker
• STAGE group members will watch an online video “Why Youth Join Gangs”
• STAGE group members will discuss in a large group the 5 risk factors discussed in the online video

Week Three: Trauma Education
• Reduce anxiety about being a in a group
• Build peer support (In your Shoes Activity)
• Educate and discuss what is trauma and knowing the signs of trauma

Week Four: Situation, Thought, Feelings, and Emotions
• Provide Information on the Cognitive Behavioral Model
• Use the Thought and Feelings Activity to provide an understanding of the model
• Use the Matching the Thought and Feeling Activity to provide an understanding of the model

Week Five: Review Reducing Body Tension, Coping Skills 1
• STAGE group members will learn how to reduce body tension
• Use the Progressive Muscular Relaxation Activity to provide an understanding on how to reduce body tension
• Use Pre and Post feeling scale of body tension to distinguish the differences
• One word Statement

Week Six: Positive Self-Talk, Coping Skill 2
• STAGE group members will learn about positive self-talk
• STAGE group members will make a personal positive self-talk list
• STAGE group members will discuss and share in group their feelings, thoughts and 3 volunteers will share their personal positive self-talk list to the group
• Positive self-talk Activity

Week Seven: Creating the Narrative, Coping Skill 3
• STAGE group members will be introduced to writing as a coping skill
• The Power of your Words! Activity will initiate group members thought and writing process
• STAGE group members will start creating their own narrative

Week Eight: SMART Goals, Coping Skill 4
• STAGE group members will write their narratives to initiate group
• STAGE group members will be introduced to SMART goals
• STAGE group members will create their personal and academic SMART goal and share with the group

Week Nine: Communication Styles Education
• STAGE group members will write their narratives to initiate group
• STAGE group members will be introduced to the 4 Basic Communication Styles Styles and Skits Activity

Week Ten: Mapping Out the Community, Coping Skill 5
• STAGE group members will write their narratives to initiate group
• STAGE group members will have the opportunity to define their living community and map their community
• STAGE group members will list two free resources in their living community and share them to the group

Week Eleven: Support (Empathy vs. Sympathy) Education
• STAGE group members will write their narratives to initiate group
• STAGE group members will learn about empathy and sympathy to focus on two types of caring
• STAGE group members will be able to role-play being empathetic and sympathetic

Week Twelve: Email Etiquette and College Representative
• STAGE group members will gain email etiquette skills
• STAGE group members will create a professional email
• STAGE group members will have a college representative to discuss options after high school, Community Colleges, California State Universities, and Universities of California

Week Thirteen: Panel Discussion and Ending of Center Stage
• STAGE group members will work on and polish their narrative stories
• Those STAGE group members who are done with their narratives, have a Support Staff read your narrative or a group member
• Select two STAGE group members to share their story for the last day of group

Week Fourteen: Narrative Stories, Panel, and Graduation
• STAGE group members and family member attendees will be welcomed and discuss
• confidentiality
• STAGE group members and family member attendees will be provided with an overview and expectations of the program
• Two STAGE group members will share their narratives in front of everyone
• STAGE group members will graduate from the program and receive their certificate of completion
• A panel with a Community College, California State University, and University of California representative will answer any questions related to college
• STAGE group members will complete a post-survey
Chapter IV: CONCLUSION

Summary of Project

The STAGE program is intended to help high school teens reduce and/or eliminate gang affiliation. The program will incorporate cognitive behavioral techniques based on the cognitive behavioral model using a psychoeducational group counseling process in a high school setting. Lipsey, Wilson, and Noser (2007) express that providing training in social and cognitive behavioral strategies and personal guidance have been linked to improved outcomes for effective at risk programs. During the program, group members will learn about gang involvement, learn skills that will help them gain personal and professional development, and create a supportive and trusting environment. The main facilitators will be high school counselors and/or school counseling interns in a graduate program. High school teens will also have access to college representatives who can provide awareness about post secondary options and community resources. For the last group meeting, there will be a panel discussion with one representative from a community college, a California State University, and a University of California institution to share information about their school, resources, and to answer questions for the high school teens.

Formative Evaluation Summary

A survey (see Appendix B) was created to gather feedback on the proposed project related to ease of implementation and use, project length, and facilitation. The questions were answered on a Likert scale and included the following answer options: 1 = “strongly disagree,” 2 = “disagree,” 3 = “agree”, and 4 = “strongly agree,” and the
average rating for each evaluator was 3.25. The school counselors who evaluated the project are employed in a local unified school district.

The evaluators also had space for comments at the end of the survey. Overall, the comments given were positive, and helpful suggestions were given on how to effectively incorporate the program in a school setting. The evaluators’ feedback included statements such as, the program is thought through well, students can benefit from the exposure to the cognitive behavioral approach and the connection with a caring school educator. Other constructive feedback included a suggestion to reduce the length of the program; the proposed program is 14-weeks.

A specific comment was made by one evaluator, which included the program’s potential for great success, and the evaluator further offered that the program could fit into a school or district that uses the restorative justice approach. According to Central School Operations (n.d.), restorative justice is an approach that moves away from punishment and towards restoring a sense of well being for those affected by a hurtful act. Restorative Justice includes inclusiveness and practices within the community and school. Practices for the restorative justice commitment include: community building, celebrating accomplishments, mediate offending behavior, transform conflict, rebuild damaged relationships, and integrating students into the learning environment (Central School Operations, n.d.). Ultimately, restorative justice is a way of ensuring accountability among the school, students, and community in order to break the cycle of punishment and violence.

Recommendation for Implementation
It would be beneficial for facilitators of the STAGE program to collect data on a counseling group program for parents and/or guardians to reduce and/or eliminate gang affiliation. This could be done by distributing pre- and post- surveys to parents and/or guardians participating in the program in order to measure their understanding of gang involvement, trauma as a negative attribute towards gang involvement, social coping skills such as problem solving, and awareness of higher education. After the data is collected and evaluated, facilitators can then determine whether to present information about a counseling group program for parents/guardians to reduce and/or eliminate gang affiliation.

**Conclusion**

Implementing a school-based program for gang affiliated high school teens and/or those at risk of gang affiliation, may reduce negative views towards their school, peers, family, and community. Helping all students requires help from professional school counselors, school personnel, and parents working as a team (Hott, Thomas, Abbassi, Hendricks, & Aslina, 2015). High school teens can also gain a sense of community by being in a program that makes them feel included and a part of a group. As stated previously, communities can be a risk factor for youth, because “offending and other subsequent victimization typically occur following exposure to family or community violence” (Koffman, et. al, p. 1). Every high school teen has a story. In some cases they might experience violence and in other cases they might receive the support from family and their community. Regardless of any high school students negative past experiences, every high school teen should receive support from the schools and be provided with resources that can help them become successful.
References


interventions: Can we identify those most at risk? *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 9(4) 279-294. Doi: 10.177/1541204011399934


University of California, Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. (2015, May). *California dropout research project: An affiliated project of the university of California linguistic minority research institute.* Retrieved May 1, 2016, from http://www.cdrp.ucsb.edu/about.htm


APPENDIX A: FACILITATOR’S GUIDE

Dear Professional School Counselor,

This curriculum guide is for the implementation of the Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE) program, a 14-week, small-group counseling program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk. Often, high school teens experience trauma related to several risk factors that can lead to developmental issues, non-pursuance of higher education, and disengagement in future career success. The main facilitator of this program will be the high school counselor, who will focus on cognitive behavioral theory and techniques that can help reduce gang affiliation and increase high education. During the program, teens will learn about: Gang involvement, trauma and reactions to trauma, the application of cognitive behavioral model, affective education and social life coping skills. Additionally, a college representative will be involved to provide presentations and discussions to promote higher education and community resources. The end purpose for teens participating in the program is to aid in their creation of a personal narrative centered on their experiences, both emotional and gang-related. Teens will learn the necessary life skills to defeat the gang experience and incorporate student success at a higher rate.

To implement the program facilitators must be aware: of the school climate, students, school administration, school educators, and the district. In order to determine if the implementation of the program is appropriate. Knowing the student population can determine the group dynamic. The school counselor facilitator can initiate the group by choosing certain students that would benefit from the program. School educators can also refer students to the school counselor facilitator of the program. Due to the specific
program audience, the school counselor must carefully facilitate the program. The environment of the program has to be in a room that minimizes group distraction. The section under environment and equipment will address details.

Introduction

Influences and experiences such as, an unhealthy family environment and structure, negative peer behavior, lack of community support, and specifically gang involvement, can be detrimental to a youth’s future. Trauma can also manifest itself in many different facets of a person’s life, affecting potential livelihood and success. Ford, Chapman, Hawke, and Albert (2007) state that “youth exposed to traumatic events present not just internalizing problems, such as depression or anxiety, but also externalizing problems like aggression, conduct problems, and oppositional or deviant behavior” (p. 1). Providing teens in high school, especially those involved in gangs, with a safe place to process their emotional issues associated with previous trauma, can help redirect feelings of depression and uselessness. The Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE) program, a program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk, can positively re-direct high school teens to work through their trauma and encourage higher education. Koffman, Ray, Berg, Covington, Albarran, and Vasquez (2009) note a link to traumatic events that result in internalizing behaviors, such as difficulty with thoughts and feelings, and externalizing behaviors, which are negative behaviors directed toward the environment. The STAGE program will use the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help high school teens cope with trauma and address internalizing and externalizing behaviors.
CBT is a common therapeutic approach used by counselors and psychotherapists to help individuals cope with behavioral and psychological issues that may be traumatic (Butler, Chapman, & Beck, 2006). The focus of CBT relies on the idea that the first area of focus should be on thinking (cognition), and is followed by a focus on feelings and manner of conduct. Responses of negative behavior from high school teens can impact their ability to graduate, maintain a clean criminal record, access higher education, and assimilate into mainstream social groups. In a group counseling setting, CBT can serve to prevent further trauma by enabling each individual youth to break free from cycles of behavior. Group counseling can be an effective treatment method to use with children and adolescents in a school setting (Jacobs, Masson, & Harvill, 2002; Wisner & Norton, 2013). High school teens need the support from the school to have successful learning outcomes and find assistance with any needs such as resources to higher academic achievement, personal development, and assistance in professional growth. In chapter two, information on the importance of successful learning outcomes and effective programing in a school setting will be addressed in depth.

Purpose of Project

The proposed project will address how school counselors in a high school setting can be inclusive and can support teens who are gang affiliated or at risk of joining a gang by incorporating a comprehensive, data-driven, school-based, gang intervention program called STAGE (Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences). The aim is to help avoid a rise in drop-out rates and reduce the negative behaviors from past trauma for all teens in the high school setting. STAGE uses the CBT model as a theoretical approach to provide a framework for working with high school youth who are gang affiliated or at risk of
gang affiliation. Using the CBT model high school teens will learn techniques that will affectively educate and promote coping skills. Group members will also benefit from increased awareness regarding gang involvement and risk factors that contribute to gang affiliation.

The curriculum is a 14-week small-group counseling program, which will use the CBT model to promote personal and professional growth. In order to encourage high school teens to pursue higher education, a college representative and a panel discussion with three different California public education systems (California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California) will be incorporated in the STAGE program. The end purpose for group members of the program is to provide a safe space to learn, be interactive in a positive way, and pursue options for higher education. The program STAGE is needed because it will provide support in a school setting, it will address risk factors that high school gang affiliated or at risk of gang affiliation students experience, it will provide opportunity for participants to work through potential trauma caused by the risk factors, and eliminate and/or reduce gang affiliation.

**Development of Project**

The inspiration for this project comes from my experience as a school counselor intern at two schools, an urban middle school in Pacoima and a high school in Van Nuys. During my experience I encountered students and families who at some point were gang affiliated. Daily I observed deviant behavior that included yelling, physically fighting, stealing, and profanity used among students and family members. Initially, I was challenged by the population of gang members in both schools and decided to learn about gang culture as well as learn how the schools tackled gang affiliation. At the middle
school in Pacoima, I learned about an outside gang prevention program called Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD). GRYD, was used as a resource at the school in Pacoima and many students and families were involved. Several students would seek GRYD services at the school setting, which included individual counseling for ten minutes with a student. At the school in Van Nuys, school counselors worked with the pupil services and attendance counselor, who is in charge of home visits when students are not attending school, referring students to alternative schools if the student is not on track to graduate, and providing crisis assessments. This made me realize the need to have a program designed for students who are gang affiliated and/or at risk of gang affiliation, because many of the students at the schools where I interned did not attend school and instead dedicated their time hanging out on the streets. Once I become a school counselor, I am determined to be a resourceful school counselor and implement programs that best suit the needs of the student population.

**Personal Qualifications**

In order for a site to develop a STAGE program for students, two adults will need to qualify to provide the intended services. The facilitators of the program will be titled support staff. The facilitators should hold a Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) credential in School Counseling and a master’s degree or meet the eligibility requirements. Eligibility can mean graduate student interns who are currently working towards a master’s degree in counseling, psychology, or social work, and who are under the supervision of school counselor at the site and a university faculty member. Support Staff will need to be able to relate to the students, meaning that at least one of the support staff should have experience working with gang affiliated members. Reaching out to programs that work
with gang affiliated members can serve as a way to provide support to one another and to recruit a support staff that can have the experience of working with gang affiliated youth. Support staff of the STAGE program must be able to dedicate an hour and a half, once a week.

**Environment and Equipment**

The environment for the STAGE program needs to be a room that has space for twelve people during group meetings. The room has to have available tables and chairs so that group members can comfortably sit and be able to write when needed. During certain meeting times the need of a projector and pull down screen will be necessary in order to display a video and potential PowerPoint presentations from presenters who will be providing awareness on higher education. Printout of the handouts and writing utensils would be needed so that high school teens can take notes.
To: Name of Teacher or School Faculty

From: School Counselor Name

Date:

Hello ___________: 

In order to promote safety and support to all of our high school students, as school counselors we will be facilitating the Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE) program, a 14-week, small-group counseling program for high school teens that are gang affiliated and/or at risk. During the program, teens will learn about: gang involvement, trauma and reactions to trauma, the application of the cognitive behavioral model, effective education and social life coping skills. The end purpose for teens participating in the program is to aid in their creation of a personal narrative centered on their experiences, both emotional and gang-related.

Please refer students to the school counselor who display:

- Trauma behavior
- A family member who is gang affiliated
- Delinquent behavior
- Lack of resources such as, clothing, school material, and/or food
- Low commitment to class

This referral will be kept with the school counselor. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and support.

-Counselor’s Name

Student Name:

Recent Grade:

Comment: ____________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

STAGE
Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE)
A Group Counseling Curriculum

By: Abigail Escatel
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 1: Introduction

**Objectives:**
1. Welcome STAGE group members and discuss confidentiality
2. STAGE group members will be provided with an overview and expectations of the program
3. STAGE group members will participate in an ice breaker
4. Assist STAGE group members to create their Community Standards
5. STAGE group members will complete a pre-survey

**Timeframe:**
55 minutes

**Materials:**
- Pens, pencils, poster board, pre-surveys

**Week Section: One**

**Preparation:**
- a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room.
- b) Bring handouts on overview of STAGE and expectations
- c) Bring pre-surveys and extra copies

1. **Welcome and Confidentiality:** (10 minutes)
   - Welcome and make sure group members sign in
   - Introduce yourself by stating their:
     - Name
     - STAGE title
     - A hobby
   - Have STAGE group members introduce themselves by stating their:
     - Name
     - Class year
     - Share a hobby
     - A hobby
   - Discuss confidentiality.

2. **Provide Overview and Expectations Handout:** (18 minutes)
   - Make sure that all group members have a copy of the handout and go over it together. Answer any questions. Inform group members that they will receive all of their paperwork at the end of the program.

3. **Icebreaker: (15 minutes) “My Supporting Friend”**
   **Objective:**
   To have group members sitting next to different people each round, to observe commonalities and differences in the group, to ease nervousness, and to have fun while learning from one another.

   **Materials needed:**
   - One chair for each group member, minus one. (Leave one person standing)

   **Procedure:**
   - It is played like musical chairs only the object is to get everyone moving to different positions and meeting those around them.
• The person in the middle states “I like my supporting friend who…” They must add something that is true about them such as, “is a human and/or a sophomore,” at which point the participants who identify with the statement need to move. For example, the supporting friend who is human would mean that everyone would go to a different chair. They cannot move to the same seat or one next to the seat they were in.
• Once reseated, everyone should re-introduce themselves to those around them
• The person left standing is then in the middle.
• The game continues in this manner.


4. **Community Standards:** (8 minutes)
   STAGE group members will set guidelines in order to work as a group and in the program. Assist during this process. Write the Community Standards on a poster board, make sure to bring the poster board to each group meeting.

5. **Pre-Survey:** (4 minutes)
   Before group members leave the classroom:
   - Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group
   - the room is clean, no trash
   - all materials are put away
   - all desk and chairs are organized
Pre-Survey

This is a confidentiality survey; no one will know that these answers are yours. For each question check the answer that best describes your experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-3 times</th>
<th>4-7 times</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How many times have you experienced being in a serious accident where you thought someone else would hurt you?</td>
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<td>2. How many times have you experienced being confronted by gangs or an individual in your community?</td>
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<td>3. How many times have you engaged in arguments or physical fights with other high school teens?</td>
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<td>4. How many times have you felt pressure of doing something that you did not want to do by gangs or community members?</td>
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<td>5. How many times have you heard of or used public resources in your community?</td>
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<td>6. How many times have you experienced expressing your feelings about gangs to an adult at a high school setting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. How many times have you experienced the thought and feeling of dropping out of high school?</td>
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<td>8. How many times does a College/University representative talked to you about education after high school?</td>
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Overview

✅ The purpose of this project is to create a 14-week-long, small-group counseling program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk.

✅ The main facilitator of this program will be the high school counselor, who will focus on cognitive-behavioral techniques based on the cognitive behavioral model.

✅ During the program, teens will learn about: gang involvement, trauma and reactions to trauma, the application of the cognitive behavioral model, affective education and social life coping skills.

✅ A college representative will be involved to provide presentations and discussions to promote higher education and community resources.

✅ The end purpose for teens participating in the program is to aid in their creation of a personal narrative centered on their traumatic experiences, both emotional and gang-related.

✅ Teens will learn the necessary life skills to defeat the gang experience and incorporate student success at a higher rate.

STAGE

Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences

STAGE Expectations:

Support each other with respect

Take ownership and responsibility for the program

Apply what you learn and participate

Growth is a process, therefore trust the process

Empower each other and the program
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 2: Gang Involvement

**Objectives:**
1. STAGE group members will be participate in an ice breaker
2. STAGE group members will be watch an online video “Why Youth Join Gangs”
3. STAGE group members will discuss in a large group the 5 risk factors discussed in the online video

**Timeframe:**
55 minutes

**Materials:**
Pens, pencils, poster board, laptop and video ready

**Week Section:**
Two

**Preparation:**
a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards

1. **Welcome, and Review confidentiality (8 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in
   - Inform group members that we will discuss confidentiality at the beginning every group meeting

2. **“Cross The Line” Ice Breaker (12 minutes)**
   **Objective:**
   To explore aspects of your life silently and thoughtfully while also being aware of other group member’s experiences.

   **Materials needed:**
   - Tape

   **Procedure:**
   - Everyone lines up on one side of the tape.
   - Rules: silent, serious, if statement applies to you cross the line, look around, then step back. You may choose not to cross.
   - The following statements are ones we use.
   - Process at the end of the ice breaker.

   **Cross the line if YOU or SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU...**
   - Are a high school teenager
   - Let a person who you care for down in a big way
   - Has snuck out of the house without parents knowing
   - Are considered trouble makers
   - Received a positive experience in high school
   - Received an F on a report card
   - Know someone close that is addicted to drugs or alcohol
   - Parents are divorced
   - Gotten so angry and didn’t know how to handle it
   - Experienced being or seeing an abusive relationship
   - Know someone that hates school
   - Believe we live in a violent society
   - Has had a family member or friend die either violently, accident, or from an illness
   - Has ever been made fun of on campus
Have ever made fun of someone else on campus
Have ever done anything you shouldn't have done just to fit in
Has difficulty trusting people
Has had a parent pass away
Believe that women are not treated equally in our society
Have been treated differently because of the color of your skin
Know someone who is or has been incarcerated
Has treated someone differently because of the color of their skin
Learned something about someone you did not know before today
Learned something about yourself that you did not know or surprised you
Crossed over when you could


3. “Why Youth Join Gangs”- Online Video: (35 minutes)
   - Play the following clips:
   - Menu:
     - Introduction
     - Introduction to Risk Factors
     - Individual Risk Factors
     - Family Risk Factors
     - School Risk Factors
     - Peer Risk Factors
     - Community Risk Factors
     - Pushes and Pulls (Skip)
     - Conclusion

**Discussion Questions:**

- Ask the group to share one word, about your feelings towards the video. Go around the circle counter-clock wise circle.
- What risk factors were discussed in the video, and which risk factor stood out the most for you?
- Can you relate to any of the risk factors discussed in the video?
- What risk factor do you disagree with the most?
- Is there something that you would change from the video? If so, what would you change?

**Before group members leave the classroom:**

- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 3: Trauma Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>1. Reduce group anxiety</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Build peer support (In your Shoes Activity)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Educate and discuss what is trauma and knowing the signs of trauma</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe:</th>
<th>55 minutes</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials:</th>
<th>Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, copy paper, poster board, shoes if needed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Section:</th>
<th>Three</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation:</th>
<th>a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Review Confidentiality and Community Standards (10 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **In your Shoes Activity (40 minutes)**
   **Objective:**
   To have group members stand next to different people, to be able to observe reactions and feelings, to be able relate, and learn from one another.

   **Material needed:**
   - Shoes, using the shoes from the group members and adding random shoes if needed.

   **Procedure:**
   - Create a big circle that includes all group members.
   - Remove their right shoe, and hand it over to the person on the left hand side.
   - Ask the group members to pass the shoes in their hand until the Support Staff yells STOP.
   - Once the Support Staff yells stop, group members will need to try to put on the shoe that was handed to them and walk for 5 minutes, try to find the owner of the shoe, and observe the owner of the shoe while still walking in the owner’s shoe.
   - After 5 minutes, the Support Staff will assist the group members in the process of returning the shoe to the owner and form a circle.
   - Once all group members form a circle, debrief can start.
   - Going around in a circle a Support Staff will initiate the discussion by asking the group members to express one feeling about the activity.
   - Support Staff will take turns asking the following questions:
     - How did it feel wearing another person’s shoe?
     - What was your biggest challenge throughout the activity?
     - What did you notice about the shoe? The owner?
     - What feelings and/or thoughts were going through during the activity?
3. **Introduce Trauma Handout and Discussion (30 minutes)**
   - Provide copy paper pens and/or pencils before discussion, group members can write their answers down if they need to.

Pre-handout: discuss the following questions:

- What do you think trauma is?
- How has trauma changed you?
- What are trauma feelings?
- What are trauma behaviors?

Post-handout: discuss the following questions:

- In your own words, how would you define trauma?
- Think of a recent traumatic situation that happened in your life, what did you do to overcome trauma?
- What is your biggest challenge with trauma?

4. **Drawing it out (5 minutes)**

The last 5 minutes of group:

- Provide scratch paper, pencils, color pencils, crayons, and markers
- STAGE group members will have opportunity to draw whatever comes to their mind

**Before group members leave the classroom:**

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Trauma Education

What is trauma: Trauma happens when a disturbing situation is experienced and negative feelings and thoughts can occur due to the disturbing situation.

What is trauma, in your own words:

What you should know: Many traumatic situations can occur, such as a natural disaster, violence, or terrorism, and each experience can affect you personally. Some signs of stress can occur after the traumatic experience. The signs of stress can be in your behavior, body, emotions, and thinking process.

Your Behavior:
- Trouble eating and sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Increase or decrease in energy levels
- Difficulty communicating and listening to others
- Outburst and anger
- Use of alcohol and substance abuse

Your Body:
- Sweating
- Chills
- Increase or decrease in appetite
- Headaches and other body pains
- Muscle twitches

Your Emotions:
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling sad/depressed
- Feeling anxious
- Not caring about anything

Your Thinking:
- Loss of memory
- Confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly
- Having trouble making decisions

Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 4: Situation, Thought, Feelings, and Emotions

**Objectives:**
1. Provide Information on the Cognitive Behavioral Model
2. Use the Thought and Feelings Activity to provide an understanding of the model
3. Use the Matching the Thought and Feeling Activity to provide an understanding of the model

**Timeframe:**
55 minutes

**Materials:**
- Pens
- Pencils
- Color pencils
- Marker
- Crayons
- Copy paper
- Poster board

**Week Section:**
Four

**Preparation:**
- a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
- b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards
- c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts

1. **Review Confidentiality (8 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Cognitive Behavioral Model (30 minutes)**
   - Go over the model as a group using the poster board and answer questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation (Stimuli)</th>
<th>Cognition (Thought) Quality</th>
<th>Physical Response (Feeling) Intensity</th>
<th>Emotion (Behavior Response)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any type of situation that you experienced.</td>
<td>After the experience, a thought rapidly occurs. During this process, your thought is generating the type of feeling.</td>
<td>A physiological response occurs. This will determine the intensity of the feeling.</td>
<td>Based on the thought and feeling. The end result emotion will determine the behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. I hear noises in the middle of the night and wake up</td>
<td>Ex. Someone might be robbing the house</td>
<td>Ex. Afraid</td>
<td>Ex. Get up slowly and quietly, and figure out the noise making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. **Provide Thoughts and Feelings Activity Handout: (15 minutes)**
   - Make sure that all group members have a copy of the handout and go over it together. Answer questions.
Before group members leave the classroom:

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group
- The room is clean, no trash
- All materials are put away
- All desk and chairs are organized
Thoughts and Feelings Activity

**What Kind of Thoughts Make You Feel…**
Directions: Fill in your thoughts for the feelings provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Thought:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Match the Thought to the Feeling**
Directions: Fill in your feelings for the thoughts provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings:</th>
<th>Thought:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I won a car!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will I pass the test, or retake the class?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t want to do anything today!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My birthday is tomorrow!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Nobody likes me!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 5: Reducing Body Tension, Coping Skill 1

Objectives:
1. STAGE group members will how to reduce body tension
2. Use the Progressive Muscular Relaxation Activity to provide an understanding on how to reduce body tension
3. Use Pre and Post feeling scale of body tension to distinguish the differences
4. One word Statement

Timeframe: 55 minutes

Materials: Pens/pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, 3x5 flashcards, copy paper

Week Section: Five

Preparation:
a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards

1. **Discuss Confidentiality and Community Standard (10 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Body and Feelings (20 minutes)**
   **Objective:**
   To have group members draw their bodies and distinguish a tensed versus a calm body

   **Material:**
   - Provide copy paper, pencils/pens, color pencils, markers, and crayons

   **Procedure:**
   - Write on the poster board in big words:
     Our bodies tell us what we are feeling!
   - Pass copy paper, on the paper provided please fold the papers in half (hot dog style).
   - On one side of the paper draw your body when it looks tensed/tight/stressed and on the other side draw your body when you feel calm with no worries.
   - After the drawings, have three group members volunteer to discuss their drawing and express similarities and differences from the drawings.

3. **Progressive Muscular Relaxation (25 minutes)**
   **Objective:**
   Group members will identify the difference between tension and relaxation.

   **Material:**
   - Chairs

   **Procedure:**
   - Before the activity, ask group members to rate their body tension from 1-5
     1: no tension, 2: somewhat tension, 3: slightly tension, 4: tension, 5: strongly tension
• Support Staff will provide participants with a flashcard. Group members will title the flashcard P.M.R (Progressive Muscular Relaxation Activity). On the flashcard, group members will rate their pre and post body tension.
• Before activity, ask participants if someone suffers from any type of body pain, if so the participant can be exempt from doing the activity.
• Have group members sit comfortably and make sure that they have enough space to stretch from their seats.
• Group members will sit on their chairs, making sure the spine is straight and feet are touching the ground.

Description:
One of the Support Staff will share with the participants:
“This is an activity that makes you focus on your body, you will tense your muscles and then relax them. This will be done by tensing muscles in our face and body for about 5 seconds and then release and relax your muscles for the same amount of time, this will be done twice”.

Start with the face: Ask participants to tense, and after waiting for 5 minutes ask them to let the tense go and do this twice.
- Forehead (“pretend you found out that you won a million dollars”)
- Nose (“pretend you smelled a dirty diaper”)
- Lips and teeth (“Cheese really tight showing all of your teeth”)

After the face, the body is next: Ask participants to tense, and after waiting for 5 minutes ask them to let the tense go and do this twice.
- Shoulders (“have your shoulders touch your ears”)
- Arms and hands (“Raise your arms in front of you and squeeze your hands like your squeezing oranges”)
- Gluteus muscle (“squeeze your gluteus as if your holding air coming out in public”)
- Legs and feet (“raise your legs and point your feel up to the sky”)

Now tense everything for 5 minutes and let it go.

After the activity, have participants rate their tension from 1-5 on their flashcard. As well as, have participants write what they did and didn’t like from the activity. Once participants are done, Support Staff collect all the flashcards.

4. **Final Word**

Close group by having participants form a circle and asking the participants to share one feeling of the day. (5 minutes)

**Before group members leave the classroom:**

- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 6: Positive Self-Talk, Coping Skill 2

| Objectives: | 1. STAGE group members will learn about positive self-talk  
2. STAGE group members will make a personal positive self-talk list  
3. STAGE group members will discuss and share in group their feelings, thoughts and 3 volunteers will share their personal positive self-talk list to the group.  
4. Positive self-talk Activity |
| Timeframe: | 55 minutes |
| Materials: | Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, blank envelopes, copy paper |
| Week Section: | Six |
| Preparation: | a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room  
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards  
c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts |

1. **Review Confidentiality (5 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Introduce what is positive self-talk (35 minutes)**

Objective:
To have group members learn about positive self-talk and create their own list that will help them in the future

Materials:
- positive self-talk handout
- pencils/pens
- color pencils
- markers
- crayons

Procedure:
- Go over the handout and answer any questions that group members have.
- Assist group members in creating their own positive self-talk list, if group members need an example of a positive self-talk situation and statement use the following on the poster board so that all participants can view the example. This should take 10 minutes.

  **Example:**

  **Situation:**
  Taking my driver’s license written test for the third time.

  **Thought:**
  I didn’t study that well, I’m not going to pass the test.

  **Positive self-talk statement:**
  I can pass the test, I have taken it twice and I know what to expect!
Third time is the charm; I can pass this test!

- After group members create their own positive self-talk list, instruct group members to get with a partner and share their positive self-talk list for 5 minutes.
- After 5 minutes, have group members form a circle with their chairs and initiate the group discussion about positive self-talk.
- Ask the following questions: (20 minutes)
  - How do you feel about positive self-talk statements?
  - Where positive self-talk statements hard to come up with, if so why?
  - Are you comfortable using positive self-talk statements, why or why not?
- Ask group members for three volunteers to share their self-talk statements with the group.

4. Positive self-Talk Activity (15 minutes)

**Objective:**

Group Members will share with two other group members a positive self-talk statement and put it inside their envelope that they designed.

**Material:**

- Blank Envelopes
- Pen/Pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Color pencils
- Copy paper

**Procedure:**

- Explain that they will design their envelopes with their names on them and share with two group members a positive self-talk statement by writing it down and place the statements inside their envelopes.
- Pass the material to the group members, have them write their names on the envelope legibly and in big letters.
- Instruct group members to design their envelope using the materials provided.
- Instruct group members to write their two positive self-talk statements using copy paper.
- After envelopes have been designed and positive self-talk statements have been written out, have group members personally deliver their positive self-talks to their group members.

**Before group members leave the classroom:**

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group
- The room is clean, no trash
- All materials are put away
- All desk and chairs are organized
Positive Self-Talk

Positive self-talk is used as a way to respond to a situation when feeling negative, angry, and/or stressed.

- Think of positive self-talk as your personal cheerleader that cheers you on through tough situations.
- Positive self-talk can be thought silently, and once you have thought of your positive self-talk you can say it out loud to motivate yourself.
- Positive self-talk can help reduce body tension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Positive self-talk List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directions: Write a situation that can make you feel negative, angry, and stressed. Then write a positive self-talk statements about your situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations:</th>
<th>Positive Self-Talk Comment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other’s self-talk statements from other group members:
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 7: Creating the Narrative, Coping Skill 3

| Objectives: | 1. STAGE group members will be introduced to writing as a coping skill  
|            | 2. The Power of your Words! Activity will initiate group members thought and writing process  
|            | 3. STAGE group members will start creating their own narrative |
| Timeframe: | 55 minutes |
| Materials: | Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker |
| Week Section: | Seven |
| Preparation: | a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room  
|             | b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards |

1. **Review Confidentiality and Community Standards (10 minutes)**  
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **The Power of your Words! Activity (15 minutes)**  
   **Objective:**  
   STAGE group members will be introduced to writing as a form of working towards trauma.

   **Materials:**  
   - Pens/pencils  
   - Notebooks

   **Procedure:**  
   - Pass out notebooks to all group members.  
   - Instruct group members to write down anything that comes to mind for 5 minutes, it does not have to make sense, it can be the same word repeated, it’s just writing.  
   - Ask group members if background soothing music can be played, while group members write.  
   - After 5 minutes, have a Support Stagg STOP the writing and have group members read their writing silently.  
   - Have discussion and ask the following questions:  
     - Initially, what were your thoughts about writing?  
     - Was it hard coming up with things to write about? If so why?  
     - How did you feel after you stopped writing?  
   - Explain to group members that the remaining time will focus on writing their narrative using their experiences, the notebooks provided are for their narrative story.  
   - Group members will not be able to take their notebooks home; group will initiate with writing for the first 15 minutes. Support Staff will collect them every day.  
   - Group members are to write one story of a traumatic situation that they experienced.  
   - Group members are allowed to illustrate their narrative as well, materials are provided.  
   - Encourage group members to be creative
3. **Participants will initiate their narratives (30 minutes)**
   - Instruct group members to initiate their narratives silently.
   - If group members have any questions have them raise their hand. If they need help on how to spell something, inform them that dictionaries and thesaurus are available.
   - Encourage group members to ask many questions about anything such as, trauma related questions, grammar, and/or information discussed in group.
   - Ask group members if soothing background music can be played. Group members can play music without lyrics.
   - Throughout the narrative silent writing, Support Staff walk around the room and be accessible to the group members.
   - Give group members a 5-minute warning to help clean up and straighten the room.

**Before group members leave the classroom make sure:**

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
### Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 8: SMART Goals, Coping Skill 4

**Objectives:**
1. STAGE group members will write their narratives to intate group
2. STAGE group members will be introduced to SMART goals
3. STAGE group members will create their personal and academic SMART goal and share with the group

**Timeframe:**
55 minutes

**Materials:**
Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker

**Week Section:**
Eight

**Preparation:**
a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards
c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts

1. **Review confidentiality (5 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Narrative Writing (15 minutes)**
   - Remind group members that writing is a silent activity.
   - Encourage them to ask questions, if they have a question have group members raise their hands.
   - Any spelling questions, direct the group members to dictionaries that are provided.
   - Background music can be played, but no lyrics.

3. **SMART Goals! (35 minutes)**
   - Before providing the handout, using the poster board spell out the word SMART in big letters and explain to group member that SMART is an acronym and stands for something. Have them guess what SMART stands for 5 minutes.
   - After 5 minutes, explain what SMART stands for (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound)
   - Explain what goals are and the importance of creating SMART goals. Ask the following questions for discussion:
     - In your words, what are goals?
     - What are your thoughts about SMART goals?
     - Why are goals important?
     - Why are SMART goals important?
     - Can you have more than one SMART goal?
   - Pass out the handout and go over it together, make sure to answer any questions.
   - After going over the handout and having group members make their own personal and academic SMART goal, have group members form a circle using their chairs.
   - Once the group has formed the circle using their chairs have four group members share one SMART goal, it can be their personal or academic (just one).
Before group members leave the classroom make sure:

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
- The room is clean, no trash
- All materials are put away
- All desks and chairs are organized
What is a goal: A goal is an agreement that you make to yourself in order to accomplish a certain task, this can be written down, saved on your phone, and/or just memorized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does SMART stand for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directions: Create your personal and academic SMART goal with the format provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific** (what, exactly is it that you want to achieve? Provide details)

**Personal:**

**Academic:**

**Measurable** (how do you know you will achieve it?)

**Personal:**

**Academic:**

**Attainable** (what is your realistic desire (10) x the possibility (10) = ___/100)

**Personal:**

**Academic:**

**Relevant** (is it really what you want?)

**Personal:**

**Academic:**

**Time Bound** (when will you achieve this by?)

**Personal:**

**Academic:**

Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 9: Communication Styles Education

**Objectives:**
- 1. STAGE group members will write their narratives to intate group
- 2. STAGE group members will be introduced to the 4 Basic Communication Styles
- 3. Styles and Skits Activity

**Timeframe:**
- 55 minutes

**Materials:**
- Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker

**Week Section:**
- Nine

**Preparation:**
- a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
- b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards
- c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts

---

1. **Review confidentiality (5 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Narrative Writing (15 minutes)**
   - Remind group members that writing is a silent activity.
   - Encourage them to ask questions, if they have a question have group members raise their hands.
   - Any spelling questions, direct the group members to dictionaries that are provided.
   - Background music can be played, but no lyrics.

3. **Communication Styles (15 minutes)**
   - Before providing the handout, have four participants volunteer in front of the room to demonstrate their personal communication style in 3 different scenarios:
     - Communication style at school with teachers
     - Communication style with friends
     - Communication style with parents/legal guardians
   - After 5 minutes, have the discussion with the group about communication and communication styles.
   - Ask the following questions for discussion:
     - What is communication?
     - Why do we need to communicate?
     - Why is communication important?
     - How many communication styles do you have? What are they?
   - Pass out the handout and go over it together, make sure to answer any questions.

4. **Styles and Skits Activity!**

**Objective:**
To learn the 4 basic communication styles in an interactive way and learn together.
Materials:

- Handout

Procedures:

- After handout is reviewed, form four even groups.
- Give each group a communication style and give them 8 minutes to make up a two-minute skit, acting out their communication style to be presented in front of the group.
- Have each group present and provide time for questions and answers until the last group presents.
- Provide scratch paper just in case participants have questions and need to write them down.

Before group participants leave the classroom make sure:

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Communication Styles

The Four Basic Styles of Communication

1. **Passive Communication**: Avoids expressing their opinions or feelings, protecting their rights, and identifying and meeting their needs.

Passive communicators will often:
- Tends to speak softly or apologetically
- Exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body posture
- Fail to assert themselves
A passive communicator will say, believe, or behave like:
- “People never consider my feelings.”
- “I’m weak and unable to take care of myself.”

2. **Aggressive Communication**: Express their feelings, and opinions and advocates for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others.

Aggressive communicators will often:
- Try to dominate others
- Use humiliation to control others
- Criticize, blame, or attack others
The aggressive communicator will say, believe, or behave like:
- “I’ll get my way no matter what.”
- “I react instantly.”

3. **Passive-Aggressive Communication**: Appear passive on the surface but are really acting out anger in a subtle, indirect, or behind-the-scenes-way.

Passive-aggressive communicators will often:
- Mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- Have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- Deny their problems
The passive-aggressive communicator will say, believe, or behave like:
- “I’m weak and resentful, so I sabotage, frustrate, and disrupt.”
- “I will appear cooperative but I’m not.”

4. **Assertive Communication**: Clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating others.

Assertive communicators will:
- Use “I” statements
- Listen well without interrupting
- Have good eye contact
Communication Styles

The assertive communicator will say, believe, or behave like:

- “I realize I have choices in my life and I consider my options.”
- “I speak clearly, honestly, and to the point.”

Answer the following questions:

Based on the four basic communication styles, what is your communication style?

What are your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors for your type of communication style?

Feelings:

Thoughts:

Behaviors:

Based on the four basic communication styles, which style would you like to incorporate in your daily life? Why?

Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 10: Mapping Out the Community, Coping Skill 5

| Objectives: | 1. STAGE group members will write their narratives to intate group  
2. STAGE group members will have the opportunity to define their living community and map their community  
3. STAGE group members will list two free resources in their living community and share them to the group |
| Timeframe: | 55 minutes |
| Materials: | Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker |
| Week Section: | Ten |
| Preparation: | a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room  
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards |

1. **Review confidentiality (5 minutes)**
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Narrative Writing (15 minutes)**
   - Remind group members that writing is a silent activity.
   - Encourage them to ask questions, if they have a question have group members raise their hands.
   - Any spelling questions, direct the group members to dictionaries that are provided.
   - Background music can be played, but no lyrics.

3. **Mapping Out your Community! (35 minutes)**
   - Express to group members that we will discuss the importance of having a community.
   - Group members will have the opportunity to define and map out their living community.
   - Two group members will have the opportunity to educate the group and list two free resources in their living community. The group members will be randomly selected.
   - Pass out and provide scratch paper, pens, pencils, color pencils, makers, and crayons to group members.
   - Give group members 3 minutes to write down and define their living community in one sentence.
   - After group members define their living community, have a discussion and ask the following questions: (10 minutes)
     - Have two group members share their definition of their living community.
     - What is the best and worst thing about your living community?
     - If you can change your living community, how would you change it?
   - After having a discussion, provide group members with a poster board blank paper and have group members map their living community by drawing a map of their community and labeling places that are important to them. Group members will have 10 minutes to map their communities.
   - Have group members use the materials provided, encourage group members to be creative.
Have group members identify two free resources that their living community provides for the entire community. If group members are not aware of any free resources, please note that.

After 10 minutes, randomly select two group members to share their maps to the group.

**Before group participants leave the classroom make sure:**

- Collect all maps, remind participants that they will receive all of their work on the last day of group along with their notebooks
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk chairs are organized
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 11: Support (Empathy vs. Sympathy) Education

| Objectives: | 1. STAGE group members will write their narratives to initiate group  
|            | 2. STAGE group members will learn about empathy and sympathy to  
|            | focus on two types of caring  
|            | 3. STAGE group members will be able to role-play being empathetic  
|            | and sympathetic  
| Timeframe: | 55 minutes  
| Materials: | Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper,  
|            | notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker  
| Week Section: | Eleven  
| Preparation: | a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room  
|            | b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards  
|            | c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts  

1. **Review confidentiality (5 minutes)**  
   - Make sure group members sign in  

2. **Narrative Writing (15 minutes)**  
   - Remind group members that writing is a silent activity.  
   - Encourage them to ask questions, if they have a question have group members raise their hands.  
   - Any spelling questions, direct the group members to the dictionaries that are provided.  
   - Background music can be played, but no lyrics.  

3. **Empathy vs. Sympathy (35 minutes)**  
   - Express to group members that we will discuss the differences of empathy and sympathy.  
   - Before providing the handout, start discussion by asking group members if they know the difference between empathy vs. sympathy?  
   - Provide handout, pens, and/or pencils.  
   - Review the handout and go over it together. Make sure to answer any questions.  
   - After reviewing the handout, have group members get into groups of two and act out empathy and sympathy between each other.  
   - After role-playing, have group members form a circle with their chairs and ask the following questions:  
     - Why is learning about empathy and sympathy important?  
     - What’s your style, are you more empathetic or sympathetic when dealing with situations?  
     - Would you prefer your friends and family to be empathetic or sympathetic? Explain.  
   - After the discussion question, have each group member share a feeling or a word of the day.
**Before group members leave the classroom make sure:**

- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Empathy vs. Sympathy

Empathy: To have feelings with a person, when a person is dealing with a situation. Being able to relate with that person by connecting their experience with yours and being able to feel how the person might feel.

Sympathy: To have feelings for a person, when a person is dealing with a situation. It sends the message of disconnecting instead of connecting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation:</th>
<th>Empathy Statement:</th>
<th>Sympathy Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EX. The person who I love broke up with me today.</td>
<td>Ex. That’s awful, I’m sorry! I know what it’s like to experience a break up.</td>
<td>Ex. You were at least in a relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Getting terminated from work after an 8-hour shift.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Losing your house keys.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Having to retake a class for the second time.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 12: Email Etiquette & College Representative

### Objectives:
1. STAGE group members will gain email etiquette skills
2. STAGE group members will create a professional email
3. STAGE group members will have a college representative to discuss options after high school, Community Colleges, California State Universities, and Universities of California

### Timeframe:
55 minutes

### Materials:
Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, thesaurus, a portable speaker

### Week Section:
Twelve

### Preparation:
a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards
c) Have copies of handout ready, bring extra handouts

1. **Review confidentiality**
   - Explain to the group that we will skip narrative writing due to having a College Representative Presenter. (6 minutes)
   - Make sure group members sign in

2. **Email Etiquette! (18 minutes)**
   - Initiate discussion by asking group members the following questions:
     - By raising your hand, who in this room has an email?
     - Have two group members share their email accounts to the group.
     - Who has heard of email etiquette?
     - Why is email etiquette important?
   - After discussion questions, pass handout and review the handout together and answer any questions.
   - After reviewing handout, pass the narrative notebooks so that group members can write notes and questions during the College Representative Presentation.

3. **Introduce the College Representative Presenter (30 minutes)**

### Before group members leave the classroom make sure:
- Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk and chairs are organized
Email Etiquette

What is email etiquette: Technology is ruling our world and most people use emails to communicate and send a message. Email etiquette provides skills that you need to attain in order to communicate professionally on the web.

Write three professional emails for yourself:
1. 
2. 
3. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Do’s:</th>
<th>The Don’ts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Do know that emails lack tone of voice, chose your words wisely.</td>
<td>- Don’t assume that the reader is hearing your tone of voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do introduce yourself when you write an email</td>
<td>- Don’t assume the person knows who you are, even if they know you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do spell check and proof read your email.</td>
<td>- Don’t just send your email without reading it again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do write an email using appropriate grammar and punctuation.</td>
<td>- Don’t write an email with all caps and explanation marks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do know the email features:</td>
<td>- Don’t use emoticons on formal emails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To (for people who need to respond)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CC (carbon copy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• BCC (to privately copy someone on an email)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subject (CRUCIAL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Signature (not too complicated)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do mention why you are emailing.</td>
<td>- Don’t forget to attachments in your emails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 13: Polishing the Narrative

Objectives: 1. STAGE group members will work on and polish their narrative stories
2. Those STAGE group members who are done with their narratives, have a Support Staff read your narrative or a group member
3. Select two STAGE group members to share their story for the last day of group

Timeframe: 55 minutes

Materials: Pens, pencils, color pencils, marker, crayons, poster board, copy paper, notebooks, dictionaries, a portable speaker

Week Section: Seven

Preparation: a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring poster board to class that clearly shows the community standards

1. Review Confidentiality and Community Standards (10 minutes)
   o Make sure group members sign in

2. Polish the Narratives (45 minutes)
   o Instruct group members to initiate their narratives silently.
   o If group members have any questions have them raise their hand. If they need help on how to spell something, inform participants that dictionaries and thesaurus are available.
   o Encourage group members to ask many questions about anything such as, trauma related questions, grammar, and/or information discussed in group.
   o Ask group members if soothing background music can be played. Participants can play music without lyrics.
   o Throughout the narrative silent writing, walk around the room and be accessible to the group members.
   o If group members are done with their narratives, have a Support Staff proof read it or a group member. Confidentiality is important, one of the reasons why it’s reviewed at the beginning of group.
   o Give group members a 5-minute warning to help clean up and straighten the room.

Before group members leave the classroom make sure:

   o Collect all handouts, remind group members that they will receive all of their handouts the last day of group along with their notebooks
   o the room is clean, no trash
   o all materials are put away
   o all desk and chairs are organized
Supporting Staff Curriculum Week 14: Narrative Stories, Panel, and Graduation

### Objectives:
1. STAGE group members and family member attendees will be welcomed and discuss confidentiality
2. STAGE group members and family member attendees will be provided with an overview and expectations of the program
3. Two STAGE group members will share their narratives in front of everyone
4. STAGE group members will graduate from the program and receive their certificate of completion
5. A panel with a Community College, California State University, and University of California representative will answer any questions related to college
6. STAGE group members will complete a post-survey

### Timeframe:
55 minutes

### Materials:
Pens, pencils, poster board, certificates, and pre-surveys

### Week Section:
Fourteen

### Preparation:
a) Arrive early to discuss the structure as a team and set up the room
b) Bring week 1 handout: Overview of STAGE and expectations
c) Bring all group members notebooks, handouts, any art work and program of completion certificates
d) Bring post-surveys and extra copies

### 1. Welcome and Confidentiality: (10 minutes)
Welcome everyone and make sure group members and family members sign in.

Introduce yourself: You should give your name, your STAGE title, and what you do for a living (decide if you want STAGE participants to refer you by your first or last name). Have STAGE group members introduce themselves. One of the Support Staff will introduce and discuss confidentiality.

### 2. Overview of STAGE and Expectations (Week 1 Handout): (20 minutes)
- Review the handout and answer any questions.

### 3. Narratives (20 minutes)
- Two selected group members will share their narratives to the group.

### 4. Panel (Community College, Cal State, UC representative)
- The representatives will also provide information from their schools
- Encourage group members and family member attendees to ask questions.

### 5. Post-Survey
- Make sure to collect all surveys
6. **Giving and Ending**

Give group members their folder that contains:

- all their handouts
- any paperwork
- art work

Certificate of Completion

- Give members their notebooks

7. **The last words!**

- Everyone for coming and all the group members for participating and being a part of the program

**Before group members leave the classroom make sure:**

- the room is clean, no trash
- all materials are put away
- all desk chairs are organized
# Post-Survey

This is a confidentiality survey; no one will know that these answers are yours. For each question check the answer that best describes your experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-3 times</th>
<th>4-7 times</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How many times have you experienced being in a serious accident where you thought someone else would hurt you?</td>
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<td>2. How many times have you experienced being confronted by gangs or an individual in your community?</td>
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<td>3. How many times have you engaged in arguments or physical fights with other high school teens?</td>
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<td>4. How many times have you felt pressure of doing something that you did not want to do by gangs or community members?</td>
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<td>5. How many times have you heard of or used public resources in your community?</td>
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<td>6. How many times have you experienced expressing your feelings about gangs to an adult at a high school setting?</td>
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<td>7. How many times have you experienced the thought and feeling of dropping out of high school?</td>
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<td>8. How many times does a College/University representative talked to you about education after high school?</td>
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Certificate of Completion

STAGE
Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences
This certificate is awarded to:

In recognition of his/her personal qualities and
finishing a 14-week-long
small-group counseling
program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated and/or at risk

California, U.S.A.
(date of completion)

Support Staff Names and Signatures
# Sign in Sheet

**STAGE**  
Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Birthday:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
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APPENDIX B: EVALUATIVE SUMMARY

Dear Participants,

My name is Abigail Escatel and I am a graduate student at California State University, Northridge. I am a candidate for the Masters of Science degree in Counseling in the Educational Psychology and Counseling (EPC) Department. I am working on my graduate project under my graduate chair, Dr. Shyrea Minton. The name of this project is called Supporting Teens Against Gang Experiences (STAGE), and it is a small-group counseling program for teens in high school that are gang affiliated or at risk of becoming gang affiliated. The main facilitator of this program will be the high school counselor, who will focus on cognitive behavioral therapy and psychoeducational techniques that can help reduce gang affiliation and increase academic engagement. During the program, teens will learn about: gang involvement, trauma and reactions to trauma, the application of the cognitive behavioral model, effective education and social life coping skills. The end purpose for teens participating in the program is to aid in their creation of a personal story centered on their experiences, both emotional and gang-related.

I invite you to participate in the evaluation of my graduate project by completing the survey that is attached. The feedback that you provide will be used to improve the project in order to make it accessible and as efficient as possible. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact my graduate project chair at shyrea.minton@csun.edu or via telephone at (818) 677-4976. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,
Abigail Escatel
abigail.escatel.146@my.csun.edu
Once you have reviewed the graduate project, please provide feedback by completing the evaluation survey below. Answers to the questions will be used to improve the project for future implementation. Please do not include your name on this sheet; your responses will remain anonymous. This evaluation is voluntary and will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

This project can be implemented in a high school setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This project is helpful for high school teens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The length of the project (14 weeks) is appropriate for students and the school setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The curriculum is easy to read and easy to follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials for the project are attainable for school counselors.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would feel comfortable using this project at my school site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would feel comfortable being a facilitator for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I can recommend this program to other school counselors at the high school level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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Additional Comments:

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