

Workshop One

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP TO THE FREE TO GROW LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Objective

- To introduce the key principles of the Free to Grow program.

Outcomes

- Participants will meet and begin to build relationships with other trainees.
- Participants will be able to identify key principles of the Free to Grow program and key training components.
- Participants will explore and be able to define the concept of prevention.
- Participants will be able to analyze the concepts of risk and protection, and identify family and community risk and protective factors.

Before You Begin

As you begin, remember that trust must be earned and cannot be assumed. For the most part, group members will not know you. They will not yet know your style as a facilitator. It is therefore important that you work to create a friendly open atmosphere as quickly as possible. You can help create this by disclosing some relevant personal information and encouraging members to ask questions from the beginning. As participants first arrive, engage them informally, starting the relationship-building process before the session begins.

The manner in which you interact with the participants during the first few minutes can set the tone for how participants react to you as a facilitator. As the session begins, encourage discussion and the free flow of ideas. Discuss your background and experience and why this work is important to you. It is less important for participants to know your position and educational degrees than for them to understand what makes you tick and why you are interested in this work.

I. People Scavenger Hunt

(20 minutes)

Effective community action groups need to be able to build relationships with one another, and learn how to work together. As the training first begins, start with an “ice-breaker” that will give participants a little time to mingle with each other in an informal way. Explain that the group will start by participating in a “people scavenger hunt.” Give each participant a copy of the “People Scavenger Hunt” handout (Handout #1). Tell them that the object of this exercise is to find one person who fits into each category within the training group. (Each person should be assigned to only one category, unless there is no one else in the room who fits the category). When a person fitting the category is found in the group, their name is

This exercise sets the tone for the kind of training participants will experience. It provides the context for training that is going to model relationship-building as a key component of leadership. The exercise also begins to set the stage for the more formal work in relationship-building that occurs later in the training.

written down. The first person to finish the scavenger hunt (and to successfully introduce all of the people on their list) is the winner. Facilitators may want to have a few group members who complete the list share their results. This not only encourages additional interaction among participants, but helps participants begin to learn each other's names. Thank everyone for participating.

II. Welcome and Introductions

(30 minutes)

Now that you have done a warm-up, spend a little time helping group members get to know each other a little better. Welcome all the participants to the first training session for the project, and thank everyone for their willingness to be a part of the Free to Grow program. Before moving on, take a few minutes to remind participants of their commitment to attend the entire training.

Share with them that you know each participant has a different story about how they agreed to participate in the training, and that those stories are a good starting point for getting acquainted. Ask everyone in the room to introduce themselves and then ask participants to pair up with a person in the group they do not know. Then have the pairs introduce themselves to each other a little more completely. Remind group members that they should share only to the level that feels comfortable to them.

Have the pairs use the following guide for their discussion:

- Introduce themselves to their partners and discuss any community affiliations they currently have.
- Ask them to briefly describe how they decided to participate in the training (i.e., who talked to them, how they learned about the program, and why they decided to come).
- To close the introduction, ask each participant to share one thing that he/she hopes will come out of their participation in the group.

Each introduction should take about five minutes. After both individuals have shared their stories, reconvene the group and let them know that this activity is just the beginning of many opportunities they will have to get to know each other. You can also remind participants that relationship-building is basic to their community development work. Note that the group will now participate in a series of activities that will help them to understand the basis of the Free to Grow program.

III. Overview of the Leadership Development Training

(15 minutes)

It is important for all participants to understand the nature of the training in which they are going to participate. Explain that the leadership development training was developed in collaboration with various Free to Grow program sites around the country. The training incorporates workshops that cover some of the basic skill areas that have been found to be important for carrying out successful community action work. This includes the following areas:

- an introduction to the principles of primary prevention;
- an introduction to the principles of community action;
- an exploration of the issues of cultural diversity and their impact on our understanding of community;
- communication and leadership skills;
- effective meeting principles;
- group facilitation;
- visioning community change;
- community mapping;
- how to define community issues to take action; and
- how to develop and carry out strategic action plans.

Point out that the training has been devised so that one session builds on the next, and it is very important that participants attend all sessions. The training also includes

opportunities to practice the skills being taught through between-session assignments, which all participants will be expected to complete. Finally, note that these sessions form the beginning of the training which participants will receive during this project. Training in interviewing and data collection will follow to prepare participants to conduct a community assessment. Additional training relevant to the issues chosen will be provided as the program moves forward. Note the significant commitment that group members have made by agreeing to be part of this project, but let them know that we expect the skills they will gain, and their improved capacity to move a community change agenda forward will be worth it.

Before moving on, note that all effective groups work with agreed upon ground rules. Briefly point out that these ground rules provide a framework for shared behavior among members. Acknowledge that many of them are probably familiar with the concept of ground rules, and that in the next session participants will work together to devise ground rules for their meetings together.

IV. Prevention Web

(20 minutes)

The first activity aimed at exploring some of the key concepts that underlie the Free to Grow program is a brainstorming or word association exercise.

Begin by writing the word PREVENTION in large letters either on a flip chart or on a blackboard. Next, ask group members to call out any words that come to mind when they think of the word prevention—as people call out the words, write them around the word prevention, drawing lines in a web-like fashion to connect them. Summarize the ideas that have come out of the web exercise, giving particular emphasis to key concepts: that prevention focuses on keeping something from happening, avoiding something, or guarding against something.

POINTER – When a brainstorming exercise begins, a group will generally give a number of quick answers up front. Usually, after the first burst of answers, there will be a lull in the room. Don't fill up the lull with conversation or with prompts. If you let the room be silent for a few moments and give participants a little time to think, you will find additional ideas emerging.



This exercise allows the facilitator to get his/her first understanding of how group members view the concept of prevention. Don't be surprised if many of the participants link prevention with school-based curricula, such as DARE or with treatment services for alcohol and drug abusers. It is important to remember that there are no "right" or "wrong" responses in a brainstorm such as this; the exercise is as important to the facilitator to help gauge the group's current understanding of prevention as it is a learning experience for participants. If you find that the group's range of answers is somewhat narrow, consider adding a few thoughts yourself before ending the brainstorming session.

BREAK

15 minutes

V. Free to Grow: Partnerships to Strengthen Families and Communities

(15 minutes)

To begin to help participants understand the focus of the Free to Grow program, the facilitator should provide a brief overview of some of the key principles of the Free to Grow program. (Use Handout #2 for Reference. The list is included on the next page in the sidebar.) Perhaps the most important point to emphasize is that Free to Grow's overall goal is to strengthen both the families and the communities of young children, and to promote healthy development by enhancing and supporting the

Free to Grow Program Principles

- 1) Children need strong supportive families to resist alcohol and drug abuse.
- 2) To prevent substance abuse among young children when they grow older, we should focus on strengthening their overall environment – i.e. their families and their neighborhoods.
- 3) Children have a better chance of healthy development if we reduce family and community “risk” factors and strengthen family and community “protective” factors.
- 4) Children need stable, safe communities for healthy development.

overall environment in which children are growing up. Thus, Free to Grow is not about teaching children about substance abuse prevention. Its focus is not on the child, but on the environment in which a child is growing up.

Free to Grow was inspired by a growing body of research from across the United States that is expanding our understanding of how to prevent substance abuse and other serious problem behaviors. Note that this research tells us that children have a better chance to live healthy lives if communities work to reduce what researchers call “risk factors” and strengthen “protective factors.” Point out that risk and protective factors are really just fancy names for things that all of us understand, and we will now participate in a number of activities that will make these concepts clear.

VI. Defining Risk and Protection

(20 minutes)

Divide the room into an even number of groups with approximately six to eight persons in each group. Assign half of the groups the word “risky,” and half the groups the word “protection.” Each group should assign a facilitator to lead the discussion and a recorder to write down the group’s ideas. Ask each group to brainstorm a definition of the word that they have been assigned.

After the groups have completed their definitions, share them with the large group and discuss. After the discussion, participants should understand “protection” as those things or activities that keep someone/something from harm and “risky” as those things or activities that potentially endanger an individual. If these key themes related to the concepts are not included in the group’s definitions, expand on the definitions already raised and emphasize these concepts before moving on.

VII. Risks/Protections in our Families and Communities

(30 minutes)

Keeping people in the groups in which they have been working, have each group take a piece of paper and make two columns—putting the word “risk” on the top of one column and “protection” on the top of the other. Ask half the groups to consider ways in which families can pose a risk to or be a protection for their children. Ask the members of the remaining groups to think about ways in which communities can pose a risk to or be a protection for their children. The facilitators should model a couple of responses with the whole group in each category before the groups begin to work on their own. (Use Facilitator Reference Sheet in Handouts as a guide for choosing a couple of examples.) Give the groups 10–15 minutes to work, and then have them share their responses. Write the responses on a chart tablet in the front of the room. After group members share their lists, use the summary list of critical risk

and protective factors contained in the handouts (Handout #3) to review those risk and protective factors the group have not listed.

VIII. Conclusion

(10 minutes)

Conclude the workshop by assuring participants that the group will be exploring the concepts of prevention and risk in greater depth. Express your hope that the first workshop provided a preliminary understanding of the research on which the Free to Grow program concept is based. Give group members an opportunity to ask questions and give their impressions of the day's activities. Let them know that in the next session, the group will begin to work on understanding some of the basic principles of community action work and learn some of the skills that will help them to carry out this work. Thank them for their effort and participation.

IX. Session One Homework

Ask each participant to bring in one newspaper article that reflects a family or community risk factor and one newspaper article that reflects a family or community protective factor. Participants can also listen to the news on either radio or television during the week and write down examples of news stories that reflect family and community risk and protective factors.

The facilitator should stress the importance of the homework assignments. Consider incentives for those who return the assignments. Incentives could include items like key chains, refrigerator magnets, etc.

If Your Community Action Group Is Already Up and Running

All members of your community action group should receive basic orientation in the principles and theory that lie at the foundation of Free to Grow. New members of your community action group should be asked to participate in Orientation Meetings that cover the material presented in Workshop One. If your program is not planning on conducting a formal training for a number of months, consider holding quarterly orientation meetings for new community action group members. This will ensure that everyone participating in the program's work understands the underlying primary prevention objectives.

Notes

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WORKSHOP ONE

Handouts

Notes

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Workshop One – Handout #1

People Scavenger Hunt

1) Find a person who is wearing blue.

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2) Find a person who has more than three siblings.

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3) Find a person who loves chocolate.

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4) Find a person who hates chocolate.

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5) Find a person who considers him/herself a good cook.

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6) Find a person who has been to the West Coast of the United States.

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7) Find a person who has lived in the same city for his/her whole life.

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8) Find a person whose family has lived in the United States for more than four generations.

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9) Find a person who plays a musical instrument.

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10) Find a person who likes to dance.

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Notes

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Workshop One – Handout #2

Free to Grow Program Principles

- ◆ Children need strong supportive families to resist alcohol and drug abuse.
- ◆ To prevent substance abuse among young children when they grow older, we should focus on strengthening their overall environment, i.e., their families and their neighborhoods.
- ◆ Children need stable, safe communities for healthy development.
- ◆ Children have a better chance of healthy development if we reduce family and community “risk” factors and strengthen family and community “protective” factors.

Workshop One – Handout #3
*Some Common Risk and Protective Factors for
 Substance Abuse and other High Risk Behaviors*

<p><u>COMMUNITY</u></p> <p>Community Risk Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization • Availability of firearms • High levels of community mobility • Availability of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs • Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms and crime • Extreme economic deprivation <p>Community Protective Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy beliefs and clear community standards regarding substance use • Low unemployment • Adequate housing to include social networks and physical infrastructures • Low prevalence of neighborhood crime • Schools that promote learning, participation and responsibility • Availability of comprehensive and quality health care • Easy access to public transportation, child care and social services • Social service providers and neighborhood resources that put community needs first 	<p><u>FAMILY</u></p> <p>Family Risk Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor family management practices • Family history of substance abuse • Family conflict • Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in substance abuse or other high-risk behaviors <p>Family Protective Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and consistent consequences for misconduct of children • Adequate family income • Parents who promote learning • Warm close stable relationships with parents and other adults • Family stability and cohesiveness • Non-kin support network, e.g., supportive role models, dependable child care • Multigenerational kinship network • Few chronic stressful life events • Plenty of attention during first year of children’s lives.
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Workshop One – Facilitator Reference Sheet
*Sample Ideas for Family and Community Risk
and Protective Factor Exercise*

<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>FAMILY</u>
<p>Communities can be at risk when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There’s nothing to do.• There’s lots of violence. <p>Communities can be protective when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbors look out for one another.• People feel like they belong.• Schools respect and value children.	<p>Families can be at risk when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family members fight all the time.• Someone in the family is using drugs.• When children don’t have structure and love. <p>Families can be protective when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They care about and communicate clearly with their children.• They provide for children’s basic needs.

