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Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention: Building Life Skills and Resilience with At-Risk Youth

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Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention: Building Life Skills and Resilience with At-Risk Youth

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Today's Objectives

- ▶ Inform about NRS services and the research that led the Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum to be an evidence-based intervention program
- ▶ Review the fourteen modules that comprise NRS' Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum that focuses on social emotional learning
- ▶ Discuss and participate in activities from NRS' Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum and learn best practices for presenting the RPC with youth you serve

What We Know...

It is estimated that between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth experience a runaway/throwaway episode annually!

NRS Youth Crisis Calls show:

- ▶ 45% of youth in crisis were away from home at time of call
- ▶ 24% of youth in crisis were contemplating leaving home
- ▶ 22% youth in crisis have run before
- ▶ 70% female, 29% male and 1% transgender

Teens and Stress

Teens + Stress - Resources = Crisis

Teens and Stress



National Runaway Safeline



History:

- Started in 1971 as Metro Help, a crisis line in Chicago, IL and in 1974 became the federally designated national communication system for runaway and homeless youth.
- In January 2013 became the National Runaway Safeline

How National Runaway Safeline can help...

By a show of hands:

- Who is familiar with NRS?
- Who has used NRS' services, or worked with a youth or family that has?

Mission
To keep America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.

Vision
NRS is the "go to" resource for America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth and their families, providing solution-focused support.

NRS Values

- Providing trauma informed solution-focused crisis intervention
- Offering non-sectarian support
- Respecting confidentiality
- Responding 24 hours a day
- Collaborating with volunteers

1-800-RUNAWAY

- ▶ Confidential crisisline for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth and their families
- ▶ 24-hour crisisline is toll-free and accessible from anywhere in the United States and its territories
- ▶ All calls to the crisisline are anonymous
- ▶ All calls are handled by our frontline team of staff and volunteers using a five-step model of solution-focused crisis intervention



Information and Referral

NRS maintains a national database of nearly 10,000 agencies and services including:

- ▶ Alternative schools
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Residential treatment
- ▶ Substance abuse treatment
- ▶ Medical assistance
- ▶ Legal information
- ▶ Law enforcement
- ▶ Child protection



Three-Way Conference Calls



- ▶ Confidential and safe
- ▶ Purpose is to advocate, mediate, and articulate
- ▶ Explore agency shelter rules and expectations



Message Relay



- ✓ Confidential
- ✓ Indirect mode of communication
- ✓ Goal...move towards a conference call



HomeFree Program

- ▶ In partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., NRS helps reunite runaway youth, 12-17, with their families and assists runaway and homeless youth 18-20 in stabilizing themselves with supportive family members and/or preparing for self-sufficient independent living.
- ▶ In addition to a bus ticket, NRS provides youth and families with resources in their communities to help start the process toward long-term positive outcomes.
- ▶ Reunited over 14,000 families since 1995.



www.1800RUNAWAY.org

- ▶ Anonymous interactive live chat (4:30-11:30pm CST)
- ▶ Anonymous bulletin board for teens
- ▶ Crisis email
- ▶ Helpful tips for teen and parents (can be downloaded)
- ▶ Caller data 2000-2013
- ▶ Areas of information for youth, parents, and educators
- ▶ Free promotional and educational materials - including RPC
- ▶ Current research



Activity Time

- ▶ This is an example of an activity from Let's Talk.
- ▶ "Who's On Your Bus?" is an activity from Module 3: Personal Influences.
- ▶ It assists youth in identifying who are the "influential others" in their lives.



"Who's On Your Bus?"

Directions: THINK about if you could fill a bus with the people in your life who are most important when it comes to making decisions about your life, who would be on that bus? FILL IN each "bus seat" (represented by the oval) with a person/group that is most important. PLACE a star next to those who are close to your age. PLACE an arrow next to the older or younger people on your bus who also influence your choices about your life. SHAKE with a partner who you invited onto your bus.



Greyhound Lines, Inc. Bus borrowed with permission.
Greyhound Lines, Inc. partners with NRS to provide the Home Free program.



“Who’s On Your Bus?”

- ▶ Who are the people on your bus? Who isn’t on your bus?
- ▶ Why are they important to you?
- ▶ Are there some that have more influence than others?
- ▶ Can you count on these people when you are in trouble or in need?
- ▶ Do they help you make good decisions? Always? Most of the time? Sometimes? Never?
- ▶ Do you feel good about the decisions they help you make?



Let’s Talk Development

- ▶ A grant from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Trust Foundation and the Center for Community and Organizational Development at DePaul University, NRS reviewed its existing runaway prevention curriculum and created a new version.
- ▶ The curriculum development was organized into the following distinct phases:
 - ▶ Phase 1: Program Research
 - ▶ Literature review, community needs assessment, and development of the curriculum framework
 - ▶ Phase 2: Curriculum Development and Field Testing
 - ▶ Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), pilot testing groups
 - ▶ Phase 3: Publication and Promotion
 - ▶ Phase 4: Translation into Spanish
 - ▶ Phase 5: Evidence-Based



Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum

- ▶ Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum (RPC) is a free 14 module evidence-based life skills curriculum available in English and Spanish
- ▶ **Target Audience:** Youth 12-20 in any setting
- ▶ **Overall Goal of Prevention Curriculum is threefold:**
 1. Educate youth about alternatives to running away; build life skills so that youth can resolve problems without resorting to running away
 2. Educate youth about seeking help from trusted adults
 3. Increase knowledge about resources and prevention through the involvement of community members as trained instructors



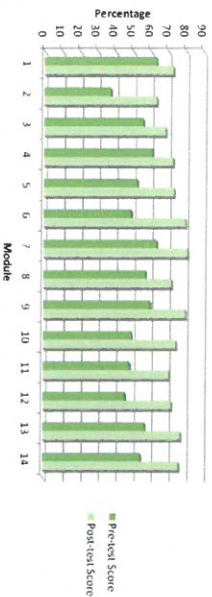
Evidence-Based

- ▶ Currently, the RPC is considered an evidence-based intervention
- ▶ Using data collected from past RPC implementation sites, one pager showing youth score improvement was created
- ▶ Taking data and analyzing it further, currently a paper is being written and will be sent to appropriate journals for publication



Evidence-Based

- ▶ The bar graph below illustrates that in every module scores showed improvement from the pre- to the post-test.
- ▶ The average increase in knowledge across modules ranged from 10% to 31%.



Evidence-Based

Overall, the evaluation data suggest that this evidence-based prevention program is beneficial to the youth who participate in the modules, both in increasing awareness and knowledge of how to deal with challenging life situations, as well as in reshaping the way youth think about how to overcome these obstacles in a healthy manner.

Let's Talk:

Runaway Prevention Curriculum

Module 1: Communication & Listening

Youth will identify barriers to communication and utilize active listening skills in real-life scenarios. An introduction to the NRS Crisis Intervention Model is provided.

Module 2: Adolescent Development

Youth will learn the normal aspects and challenges associated with adolescent development. Youth will create a personal identity space based on their strengths and qualities.

Module 3: Personal Influences & Decision Making

Youth identify how personal values, principles, and beliefs will impact their decision making. Youth will reflect on the role of influential others in decision making.

Let's Talk:

Runaway Prevention Curriculum

Module 4: Peers

Youth will discuss positive and negative, direct and indirect peer pressure and characterize their current friendships and social groups.

Module 5: Families: Roles & Responsibilities

Youth will define the term "family" for themselves and will consider the roles and responsibilities each "family" member holds. Techniques to improve communication among family members and skills to resolve family challenges will be addressed.

Module 6: Runaway Reality

Youth will brainstorm reasons why young people choose to run away, questions to consider before leaving, and options other than running.

Pretend that someone peeled back the roof of the structure you consider home. Draw the rooms and the people that make up what you consider home. Think about the responsibilities of each person that you would include under the roof.



Activity Review

- The Kids Call Program allows sites nationwide to welcome NRS into their group at no charge!
- Alleviate the anxiety of calling the hotline
- An NRS representative will explain and clarify our services

➤ Mock Call

➤ Answer Questions

Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum

Youth will identify their own personal “safe place” and learn about the National Safe Place program, which invites local businesses and agencies to provide access to immediate help and supportive resources for all young people in crisis.

Youth will consider who in their community is affected, both directly and indirectly, by a runaway incident. Youth will learn to use their community as a resource and discover ways to contribute to their community.

Youth will identify and recognize mental and physical reactions to anger and learn positive ways to deal with these reactions.

Activity Review

WHAT FLIPS YOUR SWITCH?



Ways To Deal With Anger

Identifying what flips your switch

**National
Runaway
SafeLine**

National
Highway
SafetyNational
Rural
Safety

Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum

Module 13: Internet Safety & Fun:

Youth will brainstorm their current uses of the Internet and ways to remain safe online. Role plays will be used to encourage Internet safety.

Module 14: Future Life Planning:

Youth will discuss facilitators and barriers for achieving the life goals they've identified in this module.

NEW Let's Talk 2.0 will be
out in the Spring!



Facilitation Tips

- ▶ Establish classroom guidelines for behavior and post them - be sure to solicit input from the students. Be willing to acknowledge students that material might have a potential to touch people deeply and develop guideline for how to be respectful and/or how to support one another as a class.
- ▶ Allow people to participate as they feel comfortable.
- ▶ Offer options for participation, for example if students seem reluctant to speak to the whole group, have students write down their ideas and share in pairs.
- ▶ Consider the layout of the room, does it encourage conversation or not? Be a good listener, make sure that you allow everyone an opportunity to share and that you can use active listening skills to make sure that students feel heard.
- ▶ Allow enough time for discussion.
- ▶ Give students time to respond, silence can be okay, allow students to process. Be prepared with examples and open ended questions to get things going. -University of Oregon - teaching effectiveness program (<http://ltpa.uoregon.edu/>)



RPC Specific Tips

- Always review the test before you facilitate a session so that you can make sure to touch on all areas.
- Be prepared to give definitions or explain concepts.
- Group size and energy may determine format of activity.
- Be prepared with examples to generate discussion.
- Utilize group dynamics when helpful to encourage participation.
- Incentives for participation can be helpful; such as a snack or items from NRS' incentive program.
- Know when and how much personal information to share. Students like to hear life experiences, so know what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Be prepared for some conversations to bring up issues for some youth.
- Prepare ways to get group back on track.
- Don't be afraid to modify...
- Ease test phobia while asking youth to take it seriously.
- The activities ask for students to read aloud. Be aware that this may make some youth uncomfortable due to their skill level.



Curriculum Benefits

- *Let's Talk* can be implemented by activity, module or in its entirety.
- *Let's Talk* provides additional resources, worksheets, and handouts for learning, as well as pre- and post-tests to assist in determining if learning has occurred.
- *Let's Talk* can lend to leadership opportunities for youth by allowing peer-led learning.
- *Let's Talk* will support life skills acquisition and prevention efforts. The curriculum can be included in service learning projects and/or used to complement existing required curricula or other social emotional learning.
- *Let's Talk* is user friendly - "A runaway prevention curriculum and a companion film provides easy to use lessons with all the materials needed when teaching youth..." -Principal Magazine, Jan/Feb 2007



Curriculum Information

- NRS offers technical assistance to all RPC users. The National Runaway Safeline (NRS) will reach out to users to get feedback, answer questions, collect data and offer incentives.
- The types of data that NRS will collect from users:
 - Pre- and post-tests
 - Group demographic information
 - Satisfaction survey from the facilitator



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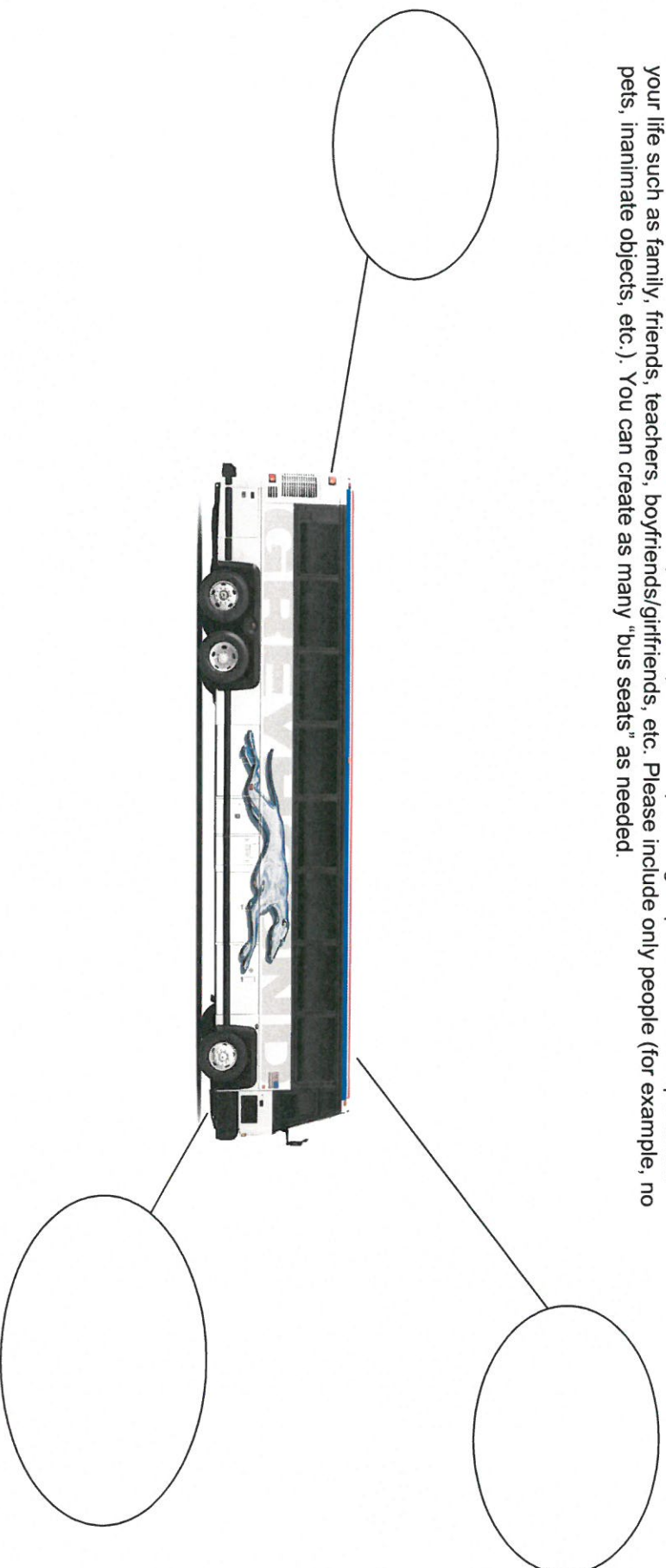
3080 N Lincoln Avenue
Chicago IL 60657
lsnelton@1800RUNAWAY.org

1-800-RUNAWAY (24-hour hotline)
www.1800RUNAWAY.org (website)



WHO'S ON YOUR BUS??

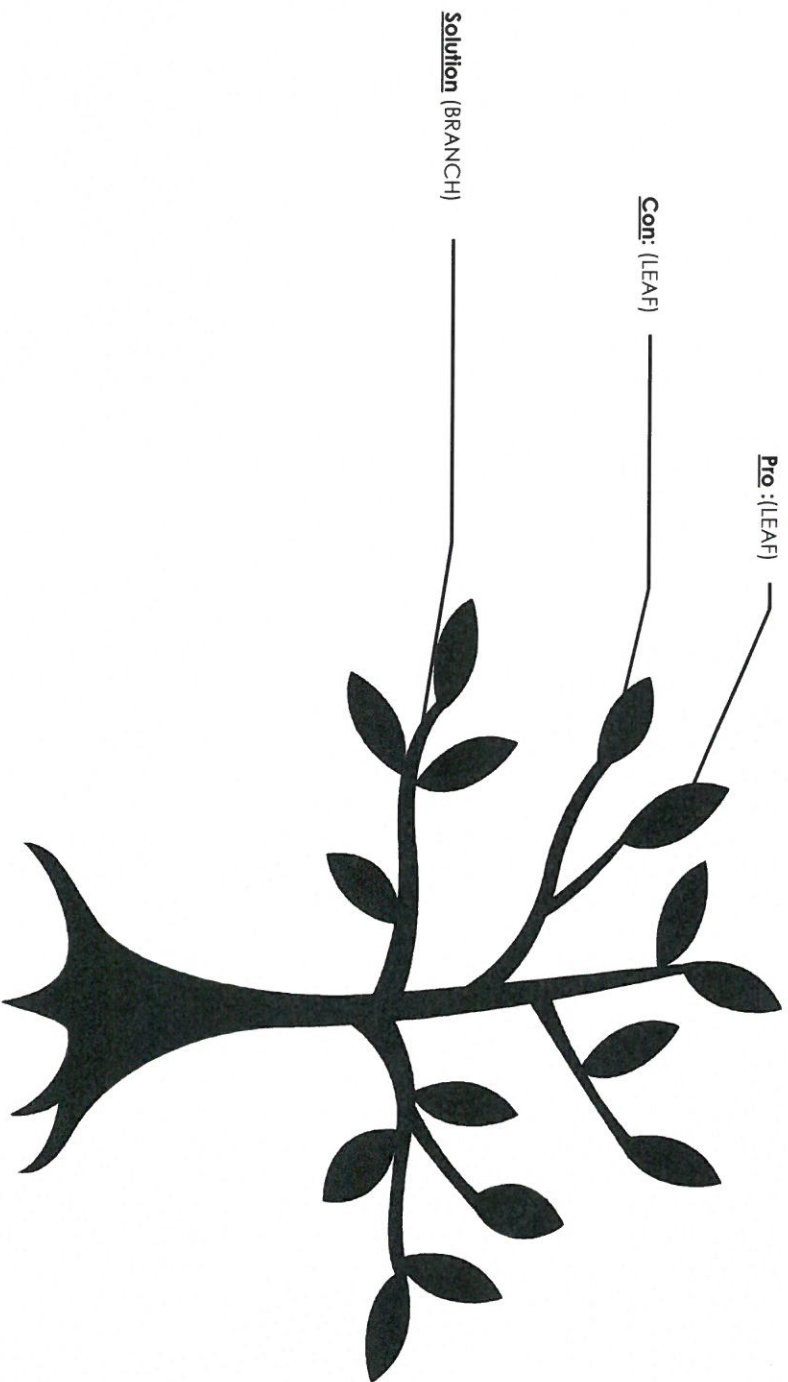
Directions: Fill in each "bus seat" (represented by the ovals) with each person/group who is most important in your life such as family, friends, teachers, boyfriends/girlfriends, etc. Please include only people (for example, no pets, inanimate objects, etc.). You can create as many "bus seats" as needed.



Greyhound Lines, Inc. bus borrowed with permission. www.greyhound.com, 1-800-231-2222.
Greyhound Lines, Inc. partners with NRS to provide the Home Free program.

Need to talk? Call us.
1-800-RUNAWAY
National Runaway Switchboard
www.1800RUNAWAY.org

Decision Tree



Problem: _____



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