

Overview

Target Population

The *Curriculum-Based Support Group (CBSG[®]) Program* is designed for children and youth who have experienced or are experiencing adversity, trauma and toxic stress in their lives. These adverse experiences far exceed their capacity to cope in healthy ways. Adverse experiences can include a variety of familial and environmental situations including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, substance misuse & addiction, mental illness and/or incarceration in the household, violent treatment of the mother, poverty and parental separation or divorce. When children and youth are exposed to chronic, stressful events such as these, their neurodevelopment can be disrupted. As a result, their cognitive functioning or ability to cope with negative or disruptive emotions may be impaired and can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms leading to substance misuse & addiction, academic failure, disruptive behaviors, delinquency, teen pregnancy, depression and other behaviors we hope all children and youth will avoid. Research indicates that unchecked adverse experiences in childhood can contribute to disease, disability, suicide, premature mortality and other health, mental, emotional and social problems.

Intervention

The *CBSG Program* is an effective, evidence-based antidote for children and youth who are exposed to adversity, trauma and toxic stress. The *CBSG Program* uses a support group model (6-12 participants), and focuses on the development of social, emotional and coping skills. The group is led by a trained facilitator who provides empathy and caring in a supportive, safe and confidential setting. The facilitator guides participants through a series of activities and facilitated discussions designed to help participants learn and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to help them cope with difficult family situations, resist negative peer pressure, set and achieve goals, and make healthy life choices including positive behavior and a non-use attitude regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Studies show that this combination of small group numbers and the teaching of social, emotional and coping life skills by a caring adult are effective strategies in reducing key risks for behaviors such as the ones previously described.

The program is based on resiliency and protective factor research and incorporates social, emotional learning (SEL) principles and practices. The core of the program is comprised of 5 Domains and Major Messages:

Self-Awareness	<i>I AM likeable, capable, unique and valued.</i>
Social-Awareness & Competence	<i>I CAN treat others like I want to be treated.</i>
Relationship Skills	<i>I HAVE meaningful relationships and people who care about me.</i>
Responsible Decision Making	<i>I WILL make healthy, responsible decisions.</i>
Sense of Purpose & Future	<i>I BELIEVE in my purpose and future.</i>

History

The *CBSG Program* is the inaugural program of Rainbow Days and was developed the same year as the agency was established in 1982. Replication of the *CBSG Program* began with the first school district in 1983 when teachers and counselors were trained as support group facilitators. Since that time more than 22,000 individuals from 44 states, England and Ecuador have been trained as facilitators. Hundreds of thousands of children and youth have participated in a *CBSG Program* because of the replication training.

Scope & Sequence

The *CBSG Program Scope & Sequence* consists of a series of 10 or 12* sessions, each devoted to a different research-based topic. Each of the session topics has developmentally matched, interactive, and experiential activities for different age groupings and program settings, which are designed to explore, explain and reinforce the topic and Major Message for that session. The same age groupings, topics and format are used in all *CBSG Program* implementation settings; only the guided discussions and activities change to meet the needs of different developmental age groupings.

Session 1: Getting to Know You	Session 2: A Celebration of Me	Session 3: Feelings
Session 4: Handling Anger	Session 5: Dreams & Goal Setting	Session 6: Making Healthy Choices
Session 7: Friends	Session 8: Resisting Negative Peer Pressure	Session 9: Putting It All Together
Session 10: Celebration & Commitment	*Session 11: Chemical Dependency: A Family Disease	*Session 12: Changes & Challenges in My Life

Number of Sessions

There is a total of 12 sessions: 10 of the 12 sessions are designed to provide a “course” that meets the needs of most selective populations; the additional two sessions are provided to address the needs of indicated populations which go beyond the scope of the 10-session course. (*Selective prevention programs target those at higher than average risk for substance abuse. Indicated prevention programs target those already using or engaging in other high-risk behaviors.*)

Frequency and Duration

Sessions are 30, 45, or 60 minutes in length (or the length of a class period) and are conducted once or twice a week, depending on the developmental age of the group participants and the environment. Frequency and duration are discussed with facilitators at the time of training.

Evaluation & Outcomes

The CBSG Program has undergone multiple evaluations studies and empirical studies which show that one or more of the following outcomes will be achieved:

- + A decrease in substance use/experimentation; + A decrease in anti-social attitudes and rebellious behavior; + An increase in anti-substance use attitudes and intentions; + Improvements in school attendance and grades; + Improved problem-solving skills; + Understanding of right and wrong; + Linking behaviors and consequences (impulsivity vs self-control); + Reduced bullying; + Increased hope and aspirations for the future

Facilitator Manual Adaptations

Kids' Connection, Youth Connection, Faith Connection and Kids' Connection, Too (collectively known as the CBSG Program) are unique, interactive, multi-cultural curriculum-based prevention interventions that teach high-risk children and youth *developmental ages 4-17 a set of essential life skills: skills to help them learn how to cope with difficult family situations (which include Adverse Childhood Experiences), resist negative peer pressure, set and achieve goals, and refuse alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

- ***Kids' Connection*** for children ages 4-12 and ***Youth Connection*** for youth ages 10-17 in schools and after school settings, youth service organizations, public housing units, recreation and community centers-essentially any setting where children and youth gather on a regular basis.
- ***Kids' Connection, Too*** for children and youth ages 4-15 in homeless & domestic violence shelters, group homes, foster care & other transitional living environments
- ***Faith Connection*** for children and youth ages 4-15 in Christian faith-based settings

Each adaptation has a USB with all necessary program handouts (**English & Spanish**) and Quality Assurance materials with reproduction permission.

*(Age ranges are based on developmental ages, not chronological)

Facilitator Training through The Trans4m Center

Attendance at a one-day training is required to be a CBSG Program *Facilitator* and receive your choice of a Facilitator Manual Adaptation. Trainings are offered in Dallas quarterly or an organization may contract with *The Trans4m Center* for a site-based training at your location. Information regarding costs, dates, etc., can be found on www.trans4mcenter.org, emailing info@Trans4mCenter.org; or by calling Kathy Daley at 214-459-1700.