

Instructor's Guide

for

Youth Corrections Series for Young Men: Choices, Consequences, and Your Future

Changing the Game for a Better Life

Overview

Every choice has a consequence, positive or negative. Our choices are *influenced* by those around us, by our upbringing, by past circumstances, and even by events we can't control. But they are still ultimately *our* choices. The only way we can be successful is to make the *right* choices, even if they are difficult. For many of your students, the choice they must make now is the decision to make a positive change.

Change is never easy, but it is possible. While your students must first be willing to change, they don't have to go through the process alone. With a support network and a strong commitment to personal growth and doing the right thing, your students will begin to see a positive difference in their lives. You will need to empower your students and enable them to see beyond the problems they face today in order to imagine a better tomorrow.

This video stresses that everyone is a person of value and that with hard work and the right resources, anyone can change their life and create a better future. The video suggests that by furthering their education, learning new skills, building a support network, and making a personal commitment to change, students can prepare themselves for reentry and greatly increase their chances of becoming successful, productive members of society. Most importantly, the video reinforces the idea that change has to come from within, and that students must persevere in the face of many obstacles to make it happen.

The video provides opportunities and questions for group discussion. Feel free to follow the cues, pausing for activities and discussion as your own schedule dictates.

Presentation Suggestions

Begin by asking students what it takes to change. What changes would they like to make in their lives? How much time and energy will it take to make those changes? Who

around them can help them to make those changes? What will they do when something stands in their way of making those changes? Stress that the process of personal transformation is difficult, but that there are steps students can take to increase their chances of success and that the video will address many of those strategies.

When you feel students have begun thinking about these issues, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to take notes or to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information they learned. Follow up this discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. Who is responsible for making positive personal changes?
2. What is the relationship between education and successful reentry?
3. What role do other people—parents, counselors, friends—play in your reentry?

Answer Key

1. Though others in a support network can certainly help, it is always up to the individual to make the change.
2. Statistics show that those individuals who continue their education while incarcerated have a much greater chance of being successful upon release.
3. Answers will vary. Ideally family will provide a guiding and nurturing influence, but also hold the individual accountable for making continued progress. Other people can serve as positive role models, perhaps even acting as mentors to the student.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: Setting Goals

Format: Individual/Group

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Worksheet, pen

Procedure:

1. The video discusses the need for setting goals and sticking to them. Use the worksheet at the end of this guide to get students started thinking about their goals in five key areas and steps they can take to make those goals a reality.
2. When everyone has finished, bring the class back together and have each student share one of their goals with the class. Have the class think of additional steps each student can take to reach that particular goal.

Activity #2

Title: Getting Involved

Format: Whole Class

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Paper, pen

Procedure:

1. The video stresses the need for individuals to get involved in their community upon release. As a whole class, brainstorm ways they can do this. This could include community service, getting involved with a faith-based organization, visiting schools to talk about important youth issues, or simply attending regular meetings or workshops at the local YMCA.
2. Have each student come up with a personal community action plan that they will try to follow upon release. This should include both the community activities and organizations they hope to get involved with, as well as the benefits they hope to receive.

Discussion Questions

1. Much of our self-image comes from what others see in us and say about us. However, we can choose whether or not those perceptions are accurate reflections of who we are inside. How do others see you? How would they describe you? How would you describe yourself? Are these descriptions similar? Where do they differ? What could you change about yourself to change others' perceptions of you?
2. What is the value of education? What opportunities can a high school diploma open up for you? What opportunities does a college degree open up for you? What other educational options do you have, such as apprenticeships or trade

schools? What difficulties will you face in trying to pursue your education? How can you overcome those barriers?

3. How do you deal with setbacks in your life? How do you cope with disappointment? What can you do to keep a positive attitude in the face of such setbacks? What can others in your support network do to help you overcome the obstacles that stand in your way?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. You don't really need a high school education to have a successful career.
2. The more you learn, the more positive changes you will be able to make in your life.
3. A mentor is someone who can help guide and advise you and be a positive role model.
4. Being involved in a religious or faith community can help you to make a positive change.
5. Even if nobody else accepts you, you can still learn to accept yourself.
6. Anger and hatred can be a positive, motivating force.
7. Having a support network is nice, but it isn't necessary.
8. The skills you might have learned in your past life or while you are in corrections can be transferred to the working world.

Answer Key

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| 1. False | 5. True |
| 2. True | 6. False |
| 3. True | 7. False |
| 4. True | 8. True |

Homework Option

Have your students imagine their lives ten years in the future. Then have them write a description of what that life is like. Where are they living? What are they doing for a living? What kind of car are they driving? What is their relationship with their family? How do they spend their free time? Encourage students to be as specific as possible. In

the following class, have students think about what they would need to do to get to that point ten years down the road.

My Personal Goals

Part of My Life	What I Want to Accomplish	What I Can Do to Get Started
My Family		
My Education		
My Job/Career		
My Leisure Time		
My Personal Well Being		