

Youth Challenge Guyana's



Life Skills Manual



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The Bridge Model:

How Do We Build A Bridge From Information to Behaviour Change?

Overview: The entire Life Skills Programme is centered around this session which is the foundation of the programme. The Bridge Model is a visual way of presenting the concept of behaviour change that is used in the life skills model. A thorough understanding of this model is essential in structuring a Life Skills Programme in your Community.

The Bridge Model is a very simple concept, but it has been found that a “light comes on” for most people when this session is presented. Although the concepts are simple, most people have not thought about the behaviour change issue in this way before. Visually imagining the process of behaviour change as building a bridge has been a powerful moment for many.

Time: 2 hours

Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

1. List risks facing young people in their community.
2. Identify Life Skills that will help young people avoid risks and build a healthy, positive future.
3. List five categories of Life Skills.

Materials:

Flip chart: Bridge Model
Markers.

Preparation

Post Bridge Model on the wall. Cover it so that participants would not see it. Place chairs in a semi-circle around it. Prepare and rehearse role play in advance. Ask two female participants to act in the role play.

The role play will be the basis of your discussion of the Bridge Model, so it is essential that it be performed well and cover the topics you wish to highlight.

Delivery

1. The Bridge Model Role Play (20 minutes)

In introducing the activity, refer to the impact of HIV/AIDS in Guyana to remind the group of the reasons for beginning a new program to work with youth on risk behaviour. Invite the group to sit back and watch the role play which may be very similar to situations we may be seeing in our communities.

II. The Bridge Model (1 hour 20 minutes)

Referring to the role-play, ask leading questions inviting the participants to explore the situation. Some examples are:

1. Is this a realistic situation? Have you seen this happen in your community?
2. Do you think Mary understood the risks of having sex with Michael?
3. If she understood what could happen and had all of the information, why did she have sex anyway?
4. What were some of the things Michael said to pressure Mary?
5. Did Mary have good reasons for not using the condoms Sharon gave her?
6. What will happen to Mary now? What do you think will happen between her and Michael?

- After discussing the role-play, reveal the Bridge Model flip chart.
- Discuss the Bridge Model with participants.
- Have participants talk about what they know about HIV/AIDS and other issues.
- Point out that young people are standing on top of all the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe from risky behaviours.
- Have participants read out loud the current knowledge of most young people.
- Emphasize that even though people have the knowledge, they may still partake in risky behaviours.
- Continually refer to Mary during this discussion.

- Now draw attention to the other side.
- Point out that as educators we want to move our young people to the other side - “The positive Healthy Lifestyles.” We want them to use their knowledge that they have to live a stronger, healthier life. (Use gestures to show this movement on the bridge model)
- Ask participants what is waiting in the “sea” if we don’t find a way to help young people successfully cross from knowledge to a positive, healthy life.

What does it take to help young people to use their knowledge to lead a better life?

- Lead a brainstorming session about what it takes to get across the bridge.
- You should continue to refer to Mary in the role play using questions like, “What was Mary missing? What did she need to help her use the information she had to make the right decision? Didn’t Mary know the risks? Did she have the information?”
- Guide the group to explore all angles of the situation so that you can get as many different suggestions as possible.
- Each time someone gives a suggestion, it becomes a “plank” in the bridge.
- Write it on the chart above the sea between the two hills.
- Keep brainstorming until the bridge is complete.

When the bridge is finished and all ideas are exhausted, go through the concept with the group again. The planks in the bridge are the “Life Skills”- the tools a person needs to help translate the knowledge into healthier behaviour. It is our job to develop these Life Skills in people- to help them acquire the skills and tools necessary to lead healthier, happier lives. Point out that even if a few skills are missing (cover some of the planks with your hands), what happens? The person will still fall into a sea of problems. It is therefore necessary to implement a comprehensive program that targets all of these issues to better the people in our communities to make healthy decisions for their futures.

III. Introduction to Life Skills and Categories

Write the five categories of Life Skills listed below on a flip chart.

Explain that we have simply grouped the Life Skills into fewer categories to make it easier to work with them.

Communication Skills
Decision-Making Skills
Thinking Skills
Relationship Skills
Emotion Management Skills

Have participants suggest which skills from the Bridge Model can fit under any given category. Explain that some Life Skill may fit into more than one category and all are important.

IV. Evaluation (15 minutes)

To ensure that the group truly understands the philosophy of the Life Skills model, have them pair off and explain the model to each other. Move around the room observing the level of understanding in the group clarifying points as necessary.

The Role Play

Sharon: A fifth form (final year of secondary school) student who has dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. She has been advising her friend, Mary to stay in school and to avoid boyfriends, sex etc. before completing her education.

Mary: A first form (first year of secondary school) that is doing very well in school. Despite her friends warning, she has become pregnant and has come to break the news to her friend.

Sharon is sitting on the step outside her house rocking her baby in her arms. As she sits alone with her baby, she talks about how tired she has been and how much work the baby turned out to be. She might say things like, "Oh baby-how troublesome you are! Keeping me up all night like that! Won't you ever settle down?"

Mary walks up and shouts "Hi Sharon, how you doing girl?" Sharon welcomes her warmly. Mary sits next to Sharon on the steps. She inquires of the baby's health and Sharon tells her that the baby has been sick and has not been sleeping well at nights. The friends chat for a while and Sharon comments on how odd it was to see Mary like this during a school day. Sharon asks Mary why she is not in school, but Mary changes the subject by talking about the baby. Sharon asks Mary again, and she again avoids the topic by asking Sharon about her boyfriend Chris. Sharon responds by saying that she has not heard from him since the birth of the baby, she heard that he is studying in Canada, but he has never come to see her or the baby. Sharon reminisces that she, too could have been in Canada furthering her studies- her grades were so high-and she reminds Mary how important it is to avoid these boys and stay in school.

Sharon again asks Mary what she was doing here on a school day. Mary responds "Sharon girl, remember the advice you always giving me?" Sharon says "Of Course I do- I told you not to make the same mistakes that I

made- forget these boys until you are finished with your studies. Abstaining from sex is the best way from getting pregnant or diseases-even HIV/AIDS” Mary continues “What else did you tell me?”

Sharon says “I told you that if you and that boyfriend of yours, Michael, cannot abstain, then remember use a condom. You remember! I even gave you some condoms! Ah! But come on my friend, what are you really doing here? Are you in trouble? What is it?”

Mary now tears in her eyes, confesses that she is pregnant for Michael. Sharon becomes angry. She reminds Mary of all the advice she has given her; she reminds Mary of the example of her own life. Mary protests with ideas like “but he loves me! He promised to marry me!” Sharon reminds her that Chris promised her the same things. Sharon asks Mary why she had sex with Michael even after her warnings. Mary told her that Michael threatened to leave her if she did not have sex with him. He said that it was the only to show him that she loved him, that everyone was having sex etc. Sharon asks why Mary had not used any of the condoms she gave her, “Were they finished?” Mary says that her church is against the use of condoms and besides Michael refused to use them.

Finally in defense of herself, Mary says, “Well, why wait? Why not have a baby now? Michael is going to be a doctor. I want to be his wife! What is the difference if I finish school? Look at Sandra- she finished her CXC and she just staying home, there are no jobs anyway!”

Suggested List of skills necessary to complete the bridge model:

- Communication Skills
 - Opportunities for the future
 - Self respect
 - Understanding consequences
 - New Values for Boys
 - Good role Models
 - Resistance to Peer Pressure
 - Self-Esteem
 - Assertiveness
 - Decision-Making Skills
 - Negotiation Skills
 - Sense of responsibility
 - Strength
 - Confidence
 - Goals for the future
- Empowerment for Girls

Our Behaviour Change Model:

How Do We Build a Bridge from Information To Behaviour Change

