

# **Educational Research Services, Inc.**

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## **Evaluation of the ARISE Foundation Life Management Skills Program Targeting High-Risk Youth in the District of Columbia March 2006**

### **Results of the Performance Measures for Goal 3**

- **75% of the youth will express satisfaction with the program, as measured by the ARISE exit survey.**  
Exit surveys were completed by 99 youth (35 girls and 64 boys between 8 and 19 years). 78% expressed satisfaction by responding either “really agree” or “agree” to all questions on the exit survey.
- **Youth will score at least 75% on the chapter quizzes.**  
Chapter quizzes were completed by 316 youth. 82% of the youth scored at least 75% on the chapter quizzes.
- **75% of the staff training evaluations collected will indicate satisfaction with the training, as measured by the training evaluation.**  
Training evaluations were completed by 252 staff. 91% of the staff expressed satisfaction by responding either “strongly agree” or “agree” to all questions on the training evaluation.
- **75% of the ARISE Life Skill Instructors surveyed will express satisfaction with the program, as measured by the instructor survey.**  
The instructor survey was completed by 33 instructors. 88% expressed satisfaction with the program by indicating “strongly agree” or “agree” to at least 6 of the 8 questions on the evaluation.
- **75% of the trainees will demonstrate competency in lesson planning and implementation at the completion of training.**  
49 evaluations of lesson planning and implementation were completed. 100% of the trainees demonstrated competency.
- **75% of the instructors observed will demonstrate competency in program implementation.**  
17 observations were conducted. Sixteen (94%) instructors who were observed demonstrated competency in program implementation. Additionally, 37 reflection questionnaires were completed by staff at the various sites. All indicated general satisfaction and gave positive feedback about the program and the instruction.

**Summary: All performance goals were met.**

**ARISE Foundation Life Management Skills Program  
Targeting High-Risk Youth in the District of Columbia**

**FOCUS GROUPS  
February 28 and March 1, 2006**

**Summary:**

Focus groups with youth and staff were conducted at six facilities in Washington, DC on February 28 and March 1, 2006. The youth were between six and 19 years old. Three school programs and three after school programs participated. Three of the programs served only students with disabilities, i.e., learning, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Both youth and staff were very positive about the ARISE life management skills program and expressed their appreciation for the relevance and importance of the program.

The youth seemed aware of the new information they were learning, particularly about how to deal with anger, violence, and bullying and how to improve their self-esteem. They also talked about learning how to manage money. Their favorite activities were group discussions and role plays. Their least favorite activity was the writing activities. Many spoke about how they have learned to get along better with their peers and feel good about themselves. They recognized the importance of having a positive attitude. It was clear that the youth enjoyed the program.

Staff at the six facilities seemed open and honest in their appraisals of the ARISE program. They all agreed that the training was excellent and important to their implementation of the program. They recognized that the youth benefited from the program and that it was an essential component of their total school or after school experience. They viewed all topics as important but focused on the importance of teaching the anger management and self-esteem units. They mentioned several times that the program helped the youth develop communication skills and talk about important issues and problems in their lives.

**Program: Free Advice**

**February 28, 2006 10:00 AM**

**Youth: Five boys and three girls – grade 6 (special education)**

**Staff: Group leader/therapist**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- It's like therapy.
- I can express myself.
- You get to share information.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings? (they are working on self-esteem).

What type of activity did you enjoy most? (role play, discussions, etc.)

- The camera project. We take pictures of our family and ask questions about our history.
- The discussions.
- The favorite things that we like. Rappers and sports.
- The things we need to change in our life.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- Yes, with my family because of the camera project.

Why do you think that learning life skills is important?

- You need it for your life when you grow up.
- Comes in handy for solving problems.
- Teaches you how to act when you go out in public.
- Teaches you how to pay bills and count change and manage money.
- Making the right decisions and solving problems.

What are some of the things you need to learn in life to be successful?

- How to talk to people.
- How to solve problems without fighting.

Do you feel that this type of group would be good for your friends? If so, why?

- Yes. My friends could learn what we are learning.

What do you know now that you did not know before you started the ARISE program?

- How to respect others.

Staff Questions:

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- It's simple, clearly defined, and can be adapted to any group.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- There are no real challenges. It has short, simple lessons. You don't have to use the entire program to see the benefits. It's activity oriented and structured.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- I enjoyed the training. I would like to see another group because I am a therapist and it would be interested to see how others respond. The materials are great and easy to use.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- Smaller groups are needed because of the varying levels within the group.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- The group responds to everything because it is interactive.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- They liked the cinquain and the calendar of life and especially the camera activity. They like to talk about themselves.

Which do they like least?

- They do not like the activities where they simply make lists because the activity does not go anywhere. The kids love to express themselves.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- It has raised their level of self awareness.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- The youth are more respectful of one another. There are not a lot of putdowns among them.

**Program: Roosevelt Senior High**

**February 28, 2006 1:00 PM**

**Youth: Three boys and one girl – grades 9, 10, 11 (special education)**

**Staff: Group leader/school psychologist**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- Describing my feelings.
- Drawing activities.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- To let go.
- How to manage it by changing and doing something else.

What type of activity did you enjoy most? (role play, discussions, etc.)

- Discussions.
- Writing activities.
- Role playing.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- No.

Why do you think that learning life skills is important?

- Managing money.
- Don't let people get to you.
- Be your own person.

What are some of the things you need to learn in life to be successful?

- Making money, spending it, and managing it.

Do you feel that this type of group would be good for your friends? If so, why?

- Yes. It would help them relieve stress.
- It would help them identify anger feelings.

What do you know now that you did not know before you started the ARISE program?

- How to control my feelings.
- I am a more pleasant person now.

**Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- The kids like the books and what the books represent. The kids like the interaction and sharing because you do not have to be a great artist or be a great writer to participate. The program breaks down the barriers that are always present.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- There are no real challenges. It is a great program.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

- A big difference especially with the autistic group. I use the activities to remind them of the behaviors they have learned.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- The training was excellent and prepared me to do the program. I began using the sample materials as soon as I could.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- We are working on anger management.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- The kids like the drawing and sharing the most.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- One of the autistic boys had altercation with his main teacher. They changed his classes and he could not handle it. When he was about to explode, he started counting, 1, 2, 3 etc. It was amazing.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- The program has helped them to open up the lines of communication. They can talk to one another and share.

**Program: Positive Nature**

**February 28, 2006 4:30 PM**

**Youth: Six boys – grades 4-6 (emotional/behavioral disorders)**

**Staff: Group leader**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- Advice
- Bullying part

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- To do other things that are positive, not negative.
- To let up.

What type of activity did you enjoy most? (role play, discussions, etc.)

- The book activities.
- Writing.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- With my little brother.

Why do you think that learning life skills is important?

- Managing money.
- When you get older and go to college.
- To get a job.
- Buying a house.

What are some of the things you need to learn in life to be successful?

- Hygiene.
- Money and how to use it.
- Anger management.
- Communication.

Do you feel that this type of group would be good for your friends? If so, why?

- Yes. They need help.
- They need to be able to talk and not fight.

What do you know now that you did not know before you started the ARISE program?

- How to manage my anger.
- I learned to be a better friend.

**Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- The class participation. How they get together and throw things out and participate.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- Not per se with the program. With the kids, but the material has to be repeated. They lack comprehension.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

- When ARISE was first introduced, I did not regularly use it. I changed groups to a younger group and I watched their excitement. They motivated me.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- Without it I would have no idea what to do. Can't imagine doing this without the training. Being prepared is so important and was stressed during training.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- I don't think so. The training was excellent. The urban part of the materials is not realistic. The information sometimes can be applied to their everyday experience. But it is helpful.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- Violence part, bullying part, the day in the life of a dropout (school setting social setting etc.). Topics that are relevant to their everyday life. ARISE provides a way out, options for getting out of a mess the kids find themselves in.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- Question/answer part. I have a list of words. It's like a fill in the blank. The bully book has those topics.

Which do they like least?

- Haven't found anything they don't like.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- Very beneficial in anger management. If you saw Cory early January you would have kicked him out. But the anger management book has made a totally different kid.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- Yes. ARISE has changed them. They have found commonality with each other which has lessened the tensions. So all the anger and fighting is much less. ARISE has helped them. This material has helped them respect each other's opinion.

**Program: Marriott Hospitality High School**

**March 1, 2006      10:30 PM**

**Youth: Six girls and three boys – grade 9**

**Staff: Three group leaders**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- The positive ways to deal with things.
- Helped me bond with other students.
- Self-esteem.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings? (they did not do anger management)

What type of activity did you enjoy most? (role play, discussions, etc.)

- Writing.
- Role plays.
- Expressing our ideas.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- No.

Why do you think that learning life skills is important?

- To get a job.
- To go to college.
- To be able to communicate with other people.

What are some of the things you need to learn in life to be successful?

- Budgeting money.
- Being able to manage your time and be a good person.

Do you feel that this type of group would be good for your friends? If so, why?

- Yes, because they sometimes don't know how to act.

What do you know now that you did not know before you started the ARISE program?

- How to budget.
- How to communicate better with my friends and teachers.

**Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- It's very interactive. The students really can get into it. The program is organized and easy to use. The goals are set so the teacher can just follow the lesson.
- It's excellent for teaching students important communication skills and helping them find ways to express their feelings and emotions.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- We had two groups this year, first and second semester. The first semester group was great. They were positive and really participated. The second

semester group had more difficulty because they had a negative attitude. So it was difficult for me to motivate them.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

- I see a difference between the 11<sup>th</sup> grade group who did not receive ARISE and the new 9<sup>th</sup> graders who did. This new group is much better behaved and I really think ARISE is partly responsible. They had the sessions first thing in the morning when they first arrived at school.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- I had the full day training and it was great. It was organized and I learned how to implement the program.
- At first I was scared because I had never done life skills instruction, but the training eased my mind. It was fun.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- The full day training is important. The others did not get the full day so they missed out. They also do not have the enthusiasm that the full day people have.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- Self-esteem.
- Money management.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- The drama activities. Most really like the role plays and the scenarios that they write.
- The writing activities. They wrote letters to the Bensons that were great.

Which do they like least?

- So far most of the students like everything about the program.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- It's hard to say. But compared to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade group, this group is far better behaved.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- The 9<sup>th</sup> grade group benefited from ARISE. I think they carry the principles with them.

**Program: Carver Terrace**

**March 1, 2006      4:00 PM**

**Youth: Two boys and four girls – elementary**

**Staff: Group leader**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- It teaches stuff that we didn't know like health, how to keep healthy.
- That it keeps me off the streets.
- I like when they help you with your homework.
- How to deal with bullies.
- The life skills.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- Need to tell your teacher.
- Instead of fighting, just calm down and see the counselor.
- Sometimes you can't always take it out on a person, so you need to talk to someone.
- Walk away instead of fighting.

What type of activity did you enjoy most? (role play, discussions, etc.)

- I like role play because you learn what to do.
- When we do work.
- Discussions because you can talk more.
- Role plays and it shows you how to handle it.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- Yes, yesterday. Sometimes you can't take your anger out. Shared with my mom.
- Shared with my cousin.
- With my uncle.

Why do you think that learning life skills is important?

- Because it keeps you away from drugs.
- Keeps you off the street and tells you what to do instead of fighting.
- When you grow up you know right from wrong.
- Teaches respect for yourself and others.

What are some of the things you need to learn in life to be successful?

- Mind my own business.
- Never to be mean to others.
- Don't fight anyone.

Do you feel that this type of group would be good for your friends? If so, why?

- Yes. Because they may get into fights and you know what to do.
- Yes. Need to know to stay out of trouble.
- Yes. They are disrespectful of teachers. They need anger management.

What do you know now that you did not know before you started the ARISE program?

- You cannot deal with problems on your own. You need to talk to a grownup.
- Drugs can kill you.

Staff Questions:

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- The creative thinking and the performance of the kids.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- I'm new to the community. To be able to adapt to the children. Children needed the structure.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

- Yes. They are more positive. The skills they are developing.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- The training was excellent, but there is always room for more.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- No, but we need to be skilled for working with the younger ones.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- Conflict and violence. They love the groups.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- Role plays always. They like to move. They like the challenge.

Which do they like least?

- Writing activities.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- Yes. Talking it out in group sessions. We have it once a week and then we have the group thing. They need to work together.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- They have learned to work together. Much more positive.

**Program: Northwest Church**

**March 1, 2006      6:00 PM**

**Staff only: Group leader**

Staff Questions:

What do you like about the ARISE program?

- I like the fact that they talk about interesting subjects, relevant topics.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE program?

- Some of the questions that they ask indicate they don't understand. The variation in ages is a problem sometimes.

Do you see a difference in your program before you had ARISE?

- Yes. The kids love coming in. It gives them something to do. They are learning something in and out of school.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- It was wonderful. It prepared me to do the program and how to reinforce the children. It encourages the children to do what they are supposed to do.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- No. I think ARISE does a good job. The weekly reports are good. The materials/books. We need something different. Maybe I will split the age groups so I can use the elementary school materials.

What topics do the youth respond to most?

- Bullying is big. They feel bullying in different ways. It's right on their level.

What activities do the youth respond to most?

- The resumes and volunteering. Role plays. They loved it.

Which do they like least?

- Sometimes it seems like the same stuff to them. It gets kind of boring for them sometimes.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- The steps and things that you can do. Children ask themselves, what can I do? The steps help.

How has the relationships among the youth changed since you have been using the ARISE program?

- Socially, it has been better. Once we started, they started getting into the group and working together.