

CHOICES Workshop Activities Summary

CHOICES

*Interactive Workshops. Engaged Communities.
Keeping teens "into" school!*



"You gave us an education about why we need education." –Evan, middle school student, Washington

DAY ONE – Stay in School

The Time of Your Life

After introducing themselves and the workshop, one of the presenters walks students through a timeline of their whole lives in stages, from being born to being retired. This activity demonstrates that even though students may think school will last forever, it is only a small part of their lifespan, yet the choices they make during their school years will have a profound impact on the nature and quality of the rest of their lives. Students' eyes grow wide as they take in the big picture of their future.

Taking Charge

The class considers six different attributes that influence their lives and explores together whether or not they control them, either a little or a lot. Students discover that all of these factors impact their lives, and that they can take charge of them by making thoughtful choices about them. One key attribute, self-discipline, is discussed in more depth, with students realizing that they can use it to help take charge of the other attributes, and thereby positively impact their future.

School Decisions & Career Consequences

Students look at three different levels of education – not graduating from high school, graduating from high school, and pursuing education beyond high school – to learn which types of jobs might be available to them at each level. They discover that a higher level of education will result in more job options with better pay, working conditions, benefits and advancement opportunities.

Money Matters

The class considers what might happen if they were to leave school before graduating and start living on their own. After finding a job paying \$15 per hour and getting a monthly paycheck of \$2,580, they start paying their bills – taxes, rent, utilities, groceries and transportation. They soon run out of money, but are only halfway through their bills, and realize this could continue for the next 50 years! This is a fun exercise with a serious "wake up" message.

What Will You Choose?

One of the presenters challenges the students to make a promise – not to the presenter, or their teachers, or even their parents, but to themselves – to graduate from high school. The presenter explains how their promise to themselves, as challenging as it may be for some, will not only make a difference in their own lives, but also in the lives of their families, their friends, their community and even the world.

Thank You Gift: Dog Tags

Each student is given a CHOICES Dog Tag that states, "I am who I choose to become." They are encouraged to wear it around their neck to always remind them that they have the power to choose who they will become. The presenter thanks the students, tells them what to expect in the next workshop session, and turns the class back over to the teacher.

DAY TWO – Skills for Success

Review of Day One

One of the presenters briefly reviews the main points of what was covered on DAY ONE, emphasizing that students can take control of their future by making thoughtful choices, and that makes them a powerful person.

Job Interview

In this “turn the tables” activity, one of the presenters pretends to be a job applicant interviewing for a new job, and the students critique them afterwards and then decide if they would hire them (*they wouldn't!*). This role play conveys to students the importance of developing strong and relevant skills to be better prepared for the world of work. The presenter also briefly notes that employers will research what students post on social media, and that they may also require drug tests and background checks before making hiring decisions.

Time Management

The class considers how to prioritize the 24 hours they have in a day with the activities they need to get done that day, using an easy-to-remember time management technique. They then practice prioritizing their time by applying this technique to six different daily activities. The presenter also discusses using a cellphone calendar or school planner to *plan their work* and then *work their plan* by following what they put in it.

The CHOICES Challenge

Students are reminded that every choice they make has a consequence, and that even simple choices made daily can have long term impacts on their lives. They then walk through two scenarios to explore the outcomes and opportunities that result from various decisions they could make in those scenarios. They discover that making well-considered choices will likely lead to more desirable outcomes and possibly even more opportunities in their lives.

SMART Goals

In this exercise one of the presenters walks students through the SMART goal-setting process, which guides them to set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. The presenter then takes students through an example of turning a regular goal – increasing their grades – into a SMART goal, so that they understand how to set and achieve challenging goals.

Wrap Up and Thank You Gift: Key to Success

At the end of the workshop, the presenters and students review what has been covered over the workshop, and then give each student a CHOICES key chain that states, “The Key to Success is Self-Discipline.” The presenters encourage them to keep this key chain as a reminder of how they can apply self-discipline to help them as they make thoughtful choices toward a more fulfilling life.

More About CHOICES

CHOICES is an interactive live classroom workshop that empowers teens to make positive educational CHOICES to increase their career and life opportunities. Trained community volunteers take students through real-world exercises on the benefits of educational attainment, introducing them to skills for success such as self-discipline, decision making, time management and goal setting. CHOICES has been delivered to more than six million teens in three countries since 1985. CHOICES Education Group is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity of Brighton Jones. To learn more and to bring CHOICES to teens in your community, please email info@choices.org, call 206-CHOICES or visit www.choices.org.