

I Dream Academy Development and Mentoring Program

Mission

The I Dream Academy (IDA) mission is to divert negative behavior and to Encourage the positive through Motivation and Development. Mentees will experience what it means to be EMPOWERED!

Purpose

The purpose of IDA is to promote values, education, good decision making skills, healthy self-image, and establish a healthy community so that mentees become more successful in school and throughout life.

Who/What We Are

IDA is a youth mentoring, development, and therapeutic program that aims to increase youth developmental assets by providing one on one or group mentoring sessions to at risk youth. We are also an alternative resource for anyone who has become involved within the juvenile court system. We are an organization who infuses the youth with the MOTIVATION to excel and the encouragement needed to maximize their fullest potential.

How We Work

Although there are many youth development and delinquency prevention programs that aim to promote positive youth development by teaching youth how to make better choices with good decision making skills, IDA has successfully coupled traditional decision making skill building with individualized developmental asset planning for each mentee based on the **developmental asset** assessment. This technique is used to enhance relationship building and establish a long term trusting relation between the mentee, mentor, and IDA that encourages and fosters developmental asset quality. Greater developmental assets can lead to positive achievement in all areas of the mentee's life including but not limited to high academic performance, development of work skills and career paths, healthy personal and interpersonal relationships, and resistance to or resiliency from other youth high risk behaviors such as substance abuse and/or criminal activity. IDA has multiple resources and a supportive team to ensure effective intervention.

According to a peer reviewed study published in 2004, researchers concluded that the greater the number of developmental assets that an individual youth is found to have, the more positive the youth develops. Likewise, the fewer number of assets found, the greater the youth risk factors are for poor decision making which often times results in under achievement, substance abuse and/or criminal activity. IDA uses a prevention and recovery method that focuses on increasing each mentees developmental assets. Each mentee is given a developmental asset assessment which is used to identify and plan the youth's personal asset building strategic plan.

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Method for Matching Mentors to Mentees

Since IDA focuses on relationship building, each mentee completes the mentee interest survey which is used to identify common interest areas between the mentee and mentor. The common area(s) of interest are used by the mentor to begin building a trusting relationship between the mentee and mentor. Each mentee works through the core pathway of the IDA developmental asset building plan while receiving individualized asset building in the areas identified as low in the mentees asset assessment. IDA prefers to couple mentors with mentees that have more common interest areas, however relationship building is successful even when the mentee and mentor have just one common area. By building discussions around the shared common interest areas, mentors are able to connect and engage in active communication with the mentee on subject areas that are of interest to the mentee. IDA focuses on helping the mentee to see him/herself in a positive light, as successful achiever. This is accomplished by first building relationship through common interest via the use of the mentee interest survey.

Training of Staff

IDA mentors are trained and proficient in using the most effective communication skills which includes the following best practices in effective communication: active listening, reflections, clarifying, summarizing, facilitating, empathizing, interpreting, questioning, linking, confronting, supporting, and behaving. IDA mentors complete the mandatory IDA trainings that include facilitator, safety, confidentiality, emergency response, and documentation. If there are concerns that the mentee may have undiagnosed behavioral/mental health disorder(s), IDA can assist with obtaining a medical referral through collaborative partnering with Dr. Regina Hutchins, PhD, RN for referrals to the Cincinnati Health Department Youth and Adolescent School Health program.

Supervision of Mentors

IDA mentors are assigned to a supervising director who ensures that mentors are adequately and timely completing mentoring engagement documentation. All in person mentoring encounters are initiated through the mentor's assignment which is generated by the directors. In rare cases where a mentee or guardian has requested emergency mentoring intervention that may involve in person response, the mentor is given guidance and allowed the flexibility to determine if an emergency preventive response is necessary. In such cases, the mentor will inform the director immediately and provide all required documentation just as with pre-scheduled mentoring encounters.

Mentoring Exit Plan

The IDA program is designed and structured to take each participant through all of the core pathway programs in the curriculum. When providing services for a mentee that has been assigned to IDA for juvenile delinquency, the mentee will complete his/her assigned time

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allotment for delinquency recovery/rehabilitation. It is IDA's philosophy that all IDA mentees are life time members. IDA's delinquency recovery mentorship program usually consist of mentoring for 6-8 months depending upon the agreement with the partnering or referring agency. IDA's mentees may return or engage in mentoring support as needed. Although IDA's delinquency assigned mentees may be given a targeted date for program completion, IDA's developmental asset principles are continuously repeated and personalized for long term development and maintenance of successful asset development. IDA is a long term mentoring program that encourages mentees to become mentors, giving back to others, by becoming leaders after successfully completing the process.

Evidence Based Model

According to the Social Policy Report (2011) published by the Society for Research in Child Development, in 2011 one thousand American adolescents are processed through juvenile courts and 160,000 of them were ordered residential placements. Because of the increase and magnitude of it issue, it is important for juvenile intervention models to measure outcomes and contribute to the knowledge, use, and scholarly literature regarding juvenile developmental or delinquency interventions and best practices.

IDA's intervention model is based upon the best practice models that are identified, tested, and published in peered reviewed literature. For example, the developmental asset model that is a foundation principle for prevention and resilience development is described as an effective and successful model for preventing youth high risk behaviors and delinquency (Benson, Roehkepartain, & Sesma, 2004). In addition, IDA uses other effective strategies that have been identified by the National Institute of Justice – Crime Solutions.gov program profiles. For example, principles described and found effective in the Equipping Youth to Help One Another (EQUIP) program places emphasis on moral education in an attempt to help youth reach appropriate age related reasoning and social skills. It was rated *promising* based on the program outcomes. Operation New Hope is another, the program uses curriculum based interventions that are similar to IDA's core pathway to assist chronic high risk juveniles to integrate into the community. IDA is designed to obtain outcome data by integrating evaluation and quality measurements from the mentee, mentor, and agency representative. IDA has developed a collaborative relationship with a public health quality outcome measures researcher to develop tools for effective qualitative and quantitative program outcome measurement. Through the use of these internal measures, IDA can evaluate the program for quality improvement opportunities or to identify trends that could contribute to better outcome intervention plans.

For More Information

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