

DEVELOPMENT OF MODULES AND PLANNING OF SESSIONS FOR TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

Satveer Kaur Gill

ABSTARCT

Life of human being is very complex today. They have to face different conditions in their daily lives. Nowadays, human being needs to develop some special skills which help them in their problems. The World Health Organization has advocated the promotion of psychosocial competence among children. Psychosocial competence has been defined as “a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behavior while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment.” Not only children, human beings of all ages need to develop the psychosocial competence today. To cope up with the rapid changes in the life of the young adolescents in the area of body, mind and soul, a positive attitude is required. Different values are needed to experience at different levels. These values must be internalized through development of appropriate expression. Life skill training is, thus, a value added program. It aims at providing students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. It also enables people to understand their self and assess their skills, abilities and area of development. Life skills enable adolescents to get along with other people and hence, making responsible decisions and making adequate adjustments with their environment. The main goal of life skill training is to empower the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of dignity and worth. This paper highlights the whole process of development of Modules and planning of sessions for Training in life skills.

INTRODUCTION

The vision of Life Skills Training is to nurture aware, responsible and empowered learners. The purpose of training in life skills is to create learners who are equipped with accurate, objective and scientific knowledge, attitudes and values which will help young learners to make informed decisions, solve problems, and think creatively and critically. They will be able to communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, cope with challenges and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

ABOUT THE MODULES AND SESSIONS FOR TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

Life skills Modules for training in life skills of adolescents are compiled and prepared from materials developed by the organizations such as: World Health Organization (WHO), GENEVA; United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization (UNESCO); UNICE; Peace Corps,

Washington; ESCAP (United Nations), New York; World Education Forum Dakar; CBSE, New Delhi; MHRD & NACO, India; NIMHANS, Bangalore and NCERT, New Delhi. For each selected life skill, various resources like books on life skills, resource persons (experts who have knowledge of values and life skills), internet etc. were consulted. Power-Point presentations were made for each life skills to provide basic knowledge of the particular life skill. Various activities, stories, tasks were included in the Modules besides Power-Point presentations.

PLANNING FOR THE MODULES

It was the first step for the development of Modules and Sessions for Training in Life Skills. In this step Identification of various life skills for Adolescents were done.

CONCEPT OF LIFE SKILLS

Life of human being is very complex today. They have to face different conditions in their daily lives. Nowadays, human being needs to develop some

special skills which help them in their problems. The World Health Organization has advocated the promotion of psychosocial competence among children. Psychosocial competence has been defined as “a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behavior while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment.” Not only children, human beings of all ages need to develop the psychosocial competence today. To cope up with the rapid changes in the life of the young adolescents in the area of body, mind and soul, a positive attitude is required. Different values are needed to experience at different levels. These values must be internalized through development of appropriate expression. Life skill training is, thus, a value added program. It aims at providing students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. It also enables people to understand their self and assess their skills, abilities and area of development. Life skills enable adolescents to get along with other people and hence, making responsible decisions and making adequate adjustments with their environment. The main goal of life skill training is to empower the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of dignity and worth.

TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

Training in Life skills is a comprehensive behavioral change approach. To improve the well-being of the people is the main aim of the Life Skills Training program. Life Skills Training has been found beneficial for everyone like children and adults, teachers and professionals. It concentrates on the development of the skills needed for life. It enables in skill learning. The training in life skills is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of various types of skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way. It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development. It aims at protection of high risk-behavior and social problems and to influence health as behavior in social context. A person's behavior stems from the individual himself and may partly be determined or influenced by environmental and social factors, it essentially stems from the individual himself. Life skills training place us on the highway of growth and development, by enabling us to lead our lives as

effectively and as efficiently as possible.

But training in Life skills program should be resourceful, warm, caring, supportive, enthusiastic competent enough to guide and counsel students effectively, have adequate knowledge about adolescents and have a positive role model for the students. The life skills program can be designed in such a way that it can be infused into other school subjects or it can be introduced as a new subject. Training in Life skills is helpful to improve thinking process. Consequently, life skill training is a consolidated and inclusive approach which combines both cognitive behavior therapy and psychosocial therapies. These are suitable for children, adolescents and adults of all ages. In Life Skills Training Program application following key steps are suggested:

- Define and Promote Life Skills.
- Generate positive and negative examples of how the skills might be applied.
- Encourage verbal action and rehearsal.
- Correct misperceptions about what the skill is and how to do it.
- Promote life skills Acquisition and its Performance.
- Provide opportunities to observe Life skills being applied effectively and for practice with coaching and feedback.
- Evaluate effectively the performance.
- Provide feedback and recommendations for corrective action.
- Foster Skill maintenance/generalization.
- Provide opportunities.
- Foster self-evaluation and skill adjustment.

According to UNESCO and Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO (2001), life skills practically are skills which intend to equip the learner with better competencies and abilities. It aims at bringing positive behavioral changes in the adolescents. Following are the usefulness of life skills:

- Motivate individuals to behave in healthy ways, provided they want to do so and are given the scope and opportunity to do so.
- Form a link between self-care and self-discipline on the one hand, and self-confidence on the other.
- Life skills must be complemented by support

from the community and cultural environmental factors and alone are not enough.

- Improve self-image.
- Contribute to better interpersonal relationships, through a sense of physical and mental well-being.
- Promote physical, mental, and social sense of positive attitudes and hence, prevent mental disorders and behavioral problems.
- Prevent health problems.
- Make for better ties in the family and peer group.
- The chance of impulsive action is reduced with increased self-awareness and better self-management.
- Provide rehearsals of situations, which bring negative pressures, like indulgence in drugs and sex. The resultant competence to withstand pressures can be used to resist peer pressure or social compulsions.
- Life skills of critical thinking and problem-solving help out-of-school children to resist and avoid abuse through critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Make it possible for adolescents to think of future goals and service to others and hence, protect the environment.

The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. Life skills training helps the promotion of psychological health of children and adolescents in different aspects of their lives and it is considered among the major preventive programs at adolescent level. Adjustment is the main source of a happy life and schools have an important role in giving awareness to adolescents regarding adjustment problems and education of life skills to them. Considering the important role of training of life skills of individuals, especially among adolescents, preventive programs at schools are necessary. This study considers the effect of Training in life skills on school adjustment and academic achievement of adolescents. For effectively implementing the Modules for Training in Life Skills Program below are some suggestions:

- The Modules are only a template and can be adapted for the individual sessions and/or the

entire approach to your local situation and language.

- Before starting, perform an assessment of the subjects. It will help to tailor the program to specific local needs.
- Community leaders must be involved. Our community leader workshops and meetings have proven invaluable. Some wonderful things can happen if the community gets energized to do training in Life Skills. They may even start programs within their own groups such as in churches, women's organizations, and so forth.
- If your work is going to be with students, meet with the headmasters and teachers first so that they will understand the program. It will possibly help in the implementation, and reinforce the content in the class.
- Life Skills can be implemented in many different populations. Do not limit your Life Skills approach to youth, children with different abilities or disabled children only.

Following steps were followed for developing the Modules and Sessions for Training in Life Skills Program-

IDENTIFICATION OF LIFE SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENTS

A list of various life skills was made and shown to the experts who have knowledge and experience of primary education like principals and vice principals, members of SCERT, principals and teachers of secondary schools etc. List contained total 25 life skills. It was requested to the experts to put tick on any 10 life skills out of 25, which they feel important for adolescents. After receiving experts' advice, 10 life skills for construction of the training program were selected through tally method. List of total selected life skills is as follows- Managing People, Effective Leadership, Empathy, Coping with Emotions, Managing Change, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Managing Time, Managing Team, Motivating People, Achieving Excellence, Influencing People, Balance Work & Life, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Interpersonal Relationships, Self-Awareness, Coping With Stress, Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, Work Skill, Managing Money, Negotiation/Refusal Skill and Advocacy Skill.

LIST OF SELECTED LIFE SKILLS USED IN THE

TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS AS IDENTIFIED BY WHO

According to World Health Organization (1997) Geneva, life skills are "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable the individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." In above definition, the word "adaptive" means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances. The term "Positive behavior" means that a person is forward looking and even in challenging situations, he can find a way of hope. From the analysis of the WHO definition we can say that life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of the skills differ across culture and settings. However, there is a core set of life skills for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and young people. Ten core life skills identified by WHO are: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Creative-Thinking, Critical-Thinking, Interpersonal-Relationship Skills, Decision-Making, Effective Communication, Coping with Stress, Problem-Solving and Managing Emotions.

PREPARATION OF DRAFT ONE OF MODULES AND SESSIONS

After identifying necessary life skills for adolescents, Modules for training in life skills were developed by the investigator. Preparation of draft one included following two steps:

FORMATION OF OBJECTIVES OF MODULES FOR TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

First of all, Objectives of Modules for Training in life skills were decided. Objectives were as follows-

- a. To make adolescents aware about the necessary life skills.
- b. To improve school adjustment of students with training in life skills.
- c. To improve academic achievement of students with training in life skills.
- d. To make adolescents able to face difficulties in their student life in particular and in real life situations in general.

PREPARATION OF THE CONTENT OF MODULES AND SESSIONS

This step involves the defining of the life skills and preparing the various activities for the development of life skills of the adolescents.

SELECTION OF METHODS OF TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

Main methods and strategies which were used to give training were discussion, lecture, activities including brainstorming, storytelling, sharing of personal experiences, questioning etc. Life skills lessons are both active and experiential. In passive learning, the teacher passes on knowledge and the learner is the recipient of information (as in didactic teaching). Active learning, however, engages the teacher and pupil in a dynamic process of learning by using methods such as brainstorming, group discussion and debates. Experimental learning is based on actual practice of what is being taught, for example, using games and role play. Life skills lessons use such active and experimental methods, and should also include homework assignments that encourage pupils to extend their analysis and practice of life skills to their lives at home and in their communities. Traditional children's games, often used in life skills lessons, offer one good example of how life skills are learned through doing, and are taught using activities that can be continued outside the classroom. For example, games like being led blindfold around a room are used to teach trust, and whispering games, where a message is whispered from person to person, are used to teach listening skills. Training in life skills is a participatory learning process and an interactive process based on practical activities, story-telling, Power-Point Presentations, feedback and reflections, consolidation and reinforcement and practical application from day-to-day life.

Methods and Techniques which are considered most effective and are frequently used in life skills lessons are Role playing, Small group/ Buzz group, Brainstorming, Group or Whole Class discussion, Asking Questions, Story Telling, Drawing, Poems, Riddles, Games and Simulation, Situation Analysis and Case studies and Debate.

These activities normally presume that the students are working together in groups or pairs. Effective work in groups will depend upon the training of life skills educators in group work methods and as group leaders. For example, for effective group work, it can be helpful to establish rules for group participation and to assign people to roles within the group, because in group everyone is considered responsible for the activities of the group. A group leader will need to give clear instructions. He will

also need to know how to deal with people who are not actively contributing to the group activities and how to split large groups into small pairs.

DETERMINATION OF SESSIONS FOR TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS

Whole the training program was divided in 12 sessions and there were twelve Training Modules that you can use with any group of adolescents. In fact, these modules are quite easy to adapt to any age. These sessions included ten life skills, one introduction session and last concluding session. These modules were prepared with a strong bias towards youth issues regarding adjustment and health. The sessions were prepared according to ten basic life skills as identified by WHO. On the basis of identified life skills and prepared content a Schedule of Training in Life Skills was designed.

EXPERT OPINION ABOUT MODULES OF LIFE SKILLS

Researcher took experts' opinion on Life Skills Training Modules and Sessions developed by her for eliminating the ambiguities and complexities before administrating on the sample. The program was shown to the experts for removing technical error in content and material, addition or removal of learning activities etc. the Training Modules were also shown to language experts for detecting the grammatical errors, spelling mistakes etc. After getting the suggestions from the experts, changes were incorporated.

TESTING OF DRAFT ONE OF MODULES OF TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS ON SMALL GROUP

The Training in Life Skills program was then applied on a small group of sample to check whether the content, language and activities of the Training Module sand Sessions was being understood by the participants or not and also to get an idea of time required for each session. On applying the Training Sessions and Modules it was seen that maximum four hours are required for completing each session.

PREPARATION OF FINAL DRAFT

After implementing the Modules for Training in Life Skills on small group, the feedback from participants was taken. On the basis of the feedback, modifications were done in the Modules and final draft was prepared (Appendix III).

IMPLEMENTATION OF MODULES AND SESSIONS FOR TRAINING IN LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

Training in life skills was given to the subjects of

experimental group in various interactive sessions for the period of six months covering Two Modules in each month. Life Skills Training Program consisted of total 12 training sessions. Each session was of maximum four hours. Researcher introduced life skills to the subjects of experimental group and tried to get information of their previous knowledge about the life skills in first session. Each session of the next ten life skills were based on the training of selected life skills. Each session included various activities, discussion, and lecture method etc. related to specific life skill. Last session was the concluding session where the researcher correlated life skills with each other and emphasized that if a person use combination of life skills by giving particular focus on certain life skills for a situation he/she can deal it in a better way. Training was a participatory learning process and an interactive process based on practical activities, story-telling, consolidation and reinforcement, Power-Point Presentations, feedback and reflections and practical application from day-to-day life. The investigator used Life Skills Modules, which include theoretical and practical contents and provide exercises in relation to each of the ten life skills. The subjects of control group did not receive any such training. After completion of the Training in Life Skills, the investigator again administered post-test on the subjects of both the groups and the scores was analyzed to see the effect of training. The day-wise schedule was well designed and implemented.

1FEEDBACK FORM

For getting feedback from the participants, feedback forms were prepared by the researcher to know the feeling and experiences gained during the Training and after the Training in Life skills.

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