

Tip Sheet

V.I.T.A.L. Steps Applied to Case Practice

Focus: Building Resiliency and Grit in Young Adults

Best Practice Summary: Successful adults know how to remove obstacles from their path rather than give up. They may demonstrate resilience and "grit" or resilience. Adults with grit do not give up when problems are not solved quickly. According to Dr. Angela Duckworth (University of Pennsylvania), grit is a better indicator of future success than IQ or talent. It is the combination of perseverance and passion towards long-term goals. It's a combination of determination, focus, passion, and resilience. Grit is the ability to persevere in the face of challenges and failure. Grit involves delaying gratification until one's goals are achieved. It is a mindset and focus on steady effort over time. Young adults need resilience to bounce back from challenges. Youth who do well later in life focus attention on what went wrong and how to fix it. There is a growth mindset that can help turn failures into positive experiences.

Young adults in DCF care often face very serious challenges. When a youth is resilient, they are more prepared to seek new ways to achieve goals. The following is a list of suggestions to augment work done by the DCF team.

Goals: Strengthen determination and resilience throughout the life of the young adult case.

V.I.T.A.L. Values and/or Essential Practice Principles in Action:

What values and principles are applied in preparation for meeting and what is applied during the meeting?

In preparation for interactions with young adults: Understanding young adult interests, passions, and goals. Understand youth's social skills--social skills are important building blocks for resilience. Specific skills include making friends, resolving conflicts, and working well in teams or groups.

During conversations: Focus on goals, steps to achieve goals, and strengthening self-confidence.

- Specific suggestions include:
 - Serve as a role model by handling your own mistakes with positivity and/or humor.
 - Model a growth-oriented mind-set to youth. Give examples of achievements that result from hard work.
 - Demonstrate a willingness to face challenges and persevere.
 - Make sure youth feel challenged in activities
 - Leverage commitments or contracts

- Encourage young adults to keep things in perspective
- Suggest helpful self- talk
- Discuss the importance of delayed gratification
- Encourage the art of deliberate practice, which is 1) setting a stretch goal; 2) focusing 100 percent on the goal; 3) getting feedback on your progress; and 4) refining your skill and reflecting as necessary
- Remind young adults that successful people failed in their early efforts. Studies have shown that youth perform better when they learn that many successful stories began with failure.
- Connect a young adult's passion with purpose. Ask: Does this interest benefit other people? How can your interest do that?
- Encourage hopefulness and a growth mindset. A growth mindset values effort vs. talent
- Resist the urge to immediately 'rescue' the young adult from a struggle
- Encourage the young adult to practice self-care.
- Encourage young adults to have strategies that can turn low moods into positive ones (e.g., doing things that the youth enjoys, spending time with others, doing physical activities)
- Teach problem solving. Brainstorm ways to solve a problem. You can offer suggestions like, "What if you stayed after school to get some extra help from your teacher? Help break down a problem into smaller components
- Praise effort vs. ability
- Suggest the youth write a letter to themselves filled with words of kindness and encouragement to themselves. Each time they feel tempted to give up, tell them to go back to the letter. This may motivate them to persist.
- Offer perspective. For example, failing a test, not mastering a sport is not a disaster. Help the youth plan for future endeavors.
- Teach self-control strategies
- Offer choices
- Set realistic goals
- Try to validate disappointment and other painful emotions while showing encouragement
- Encourage young persons to look for opportunities to expand their talents in larger arenas. For example, if a student likes to participate in school plays, is there a change to audition for a town theater company
- Encourage how to embrace a complex situation as a challenge. And teach a young adult how to reframe challenges in ways that felt less threatening.
- Remember that resilience needs relationships. In the context of positive relationships with caring individuals, youth can strengthen coping skills. Increase the young adults time with others who care about them.
- Remind youth that it's okay to ask for help when they need it. Being "strong" means knowing when to ask for help
- Provide opportunities to think and act independently

- Encourage young adults to take safe, considered risks. Age appropriate freedom lets youth learn where the limits are, encourages them to think about their decisions, and teaches them to cope with things when they go wrong
- Be realistic and "meet youth where they are"

Resources:

www.parentandteen.com

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.psychcentral.com

For Coaching and Support of Skill Development in Supervision:

Reflective prompts to supervisor: Have I provided concrete examples? Am I showing how to apply these skills in practice? Consider how the team is applying the core practice principles (i.e., engage & exchange information, assess & understand strengths, fortify & support, reflect & adjust). Consider the team member's level of skill mastery in this area.

Foundational: The team member is at an early stage of core practice and skill acquisition. The team member is supported in learning the skills. The team member has an opportunity to develop skills. Coaching agendas may target specific skills for development. The skills are demonstrated and actively coached by team leaders.

Rising: The team member occasionally applies the practices and skills independently. Coaching agendas focus on generalizing skills. The team member demonstrates increasing understanding of the practices. Skills are demonstrated and coached by team leaders.

Secure: The team member consistently applies skills independently to a wide range of settings and aspires to apply knowledge and understanding. There is a range of evidence that shows a deeper understanding of concepts and that skills are sustained over time.

Suggested CQI Measures

- The Omega Assessment given by the ACR team assesses grit. Has this been reviewed, considered?

- Does the team seek opportunities for the youth to improve resiliency?

- Is growth in resiliency tracked across the case plan?