Champions for Teens:

Advocating for Homeless Youth Using Possible Selves

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The Need for a Champion:

- Exponential growth of homeless students

    2013-2014 SY 4 Students were identified as homeless

    2018-2019 SY 97 Students were identified as homeless

- Raising awareness in our community lead to financial donations, but not relational ones
- Seeking and finding collaboration with the Lancaster County Homeless Coalition
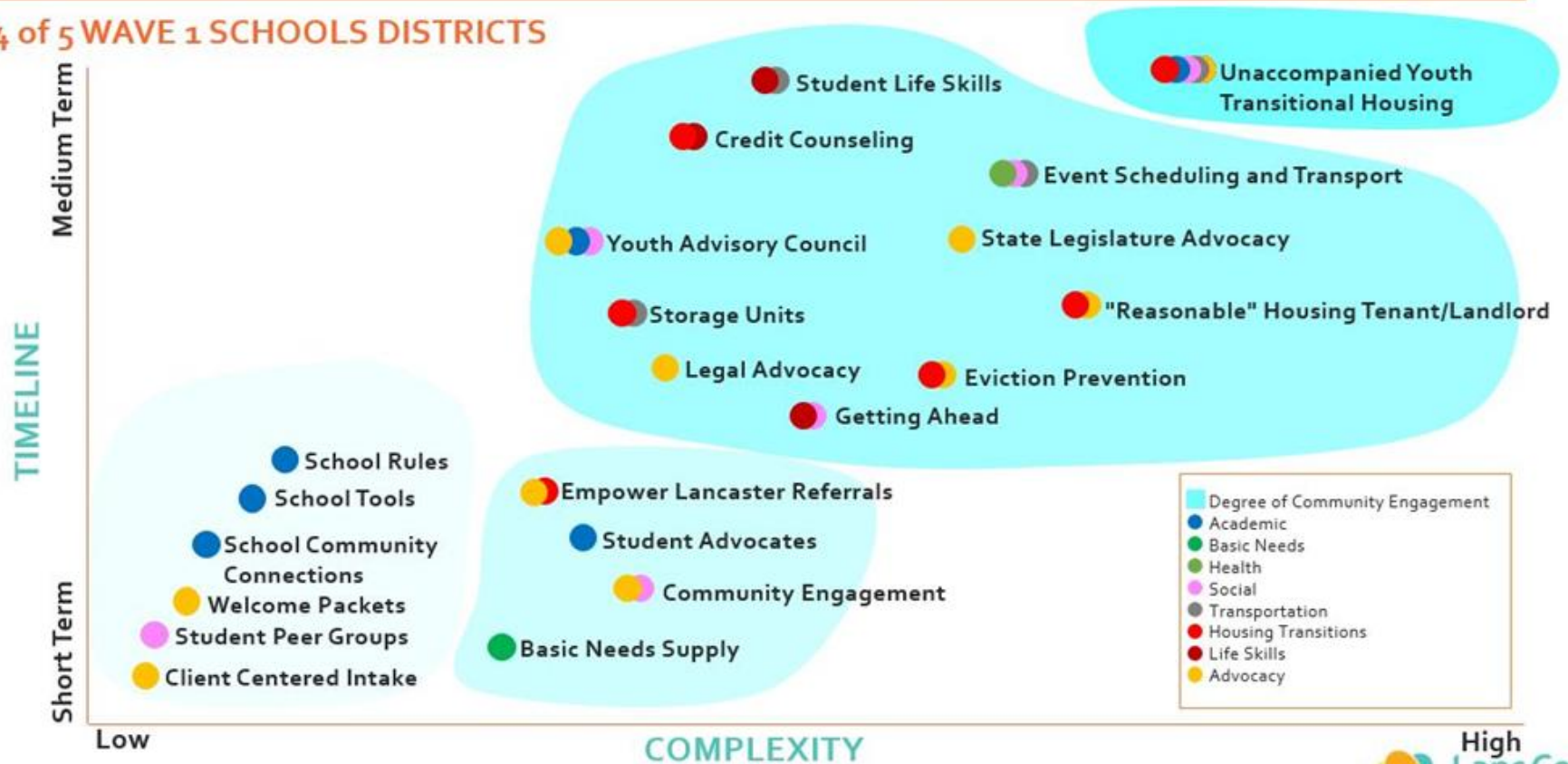
But what would a student advocate program look like?

Youth who are homeless have very low amounts of social capital resources (De La Haye et al. 2012)

- Social capital increases: employment services, higher education, and academic performance . Barman-Adhikari & Rice, 2014; Malecki and Demaray, 2008; Skobba et al., 2018). Protection from trafficking substance abuse (Ferguson and Xie, 2012; Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018)

Intervention research a review by Atlena et al. (2019) found 11 intervention studies in 2009, and 13 unique studies in 2019). **Almost no trace of intervention research in schools.**

Similar programs help similarly at risk children:

Mentoring: Across disciplines mentoring improves behavioral, academic, health, personal, and professional outcomes (Eby et al., 2009)

CASA: Children with a CASA experience greater academic success, more permanency, and more support services (Litzelfilner, 2002; Lawson & Berrick, 2013; National CASA Association, 2020)

Theoretical Framework

Problem Theory: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

$D=f(PE)$: Development is a function of the person in their environment. Stressful environments create distressed development. Youth who are homeless experience numerous risk factors that impact well-being. Due to their homeless status, poverty, and age, their development is compromised

Program Theory: Resilience theory

The resilience of a child can be fostered through the support of a caring adult.

Program Theory: Social Capital Theory

Caring adults also represent a connection to social capital. Establishing a youth into a positive social network increases their ability to share in the resources of the community.

Resilience=f(SE)

IV:
Resilience/
Caring
Adults

DV:
Social
Support

Grades

Resilience

Attendance
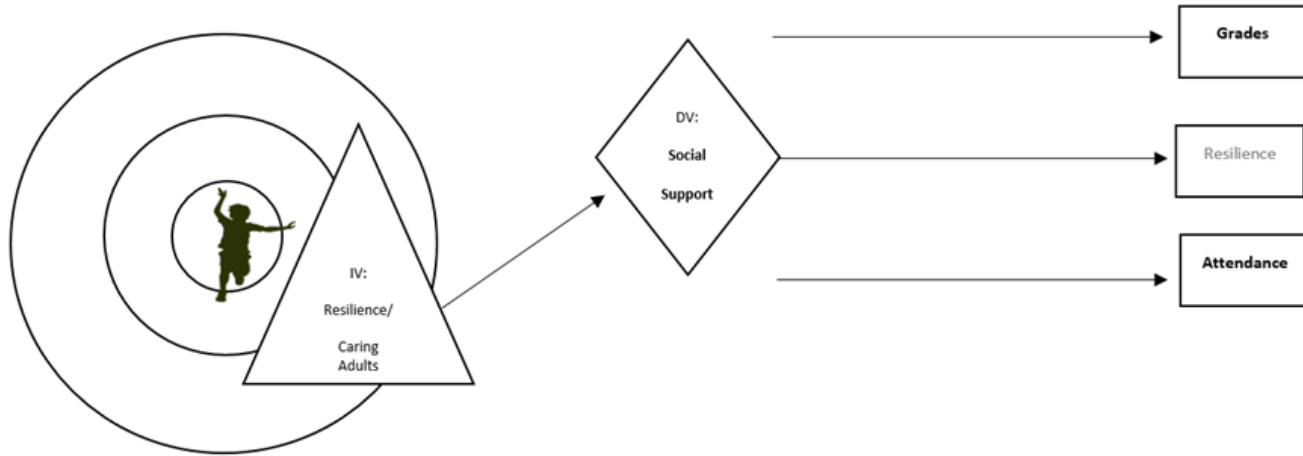
More than a mentor...

Creating the Model of an Advocate: A Champion

A champion is an individual who:

- **Exhibits empathy, flexibility, persistence, active listening, consciousness, and advocacy,** *so that they can:*
- Build a positive relationship with the youth
- Seek ways to connect the youth to the community
- Help the youth create and achieve goals
- Advocate for best interests of the youth
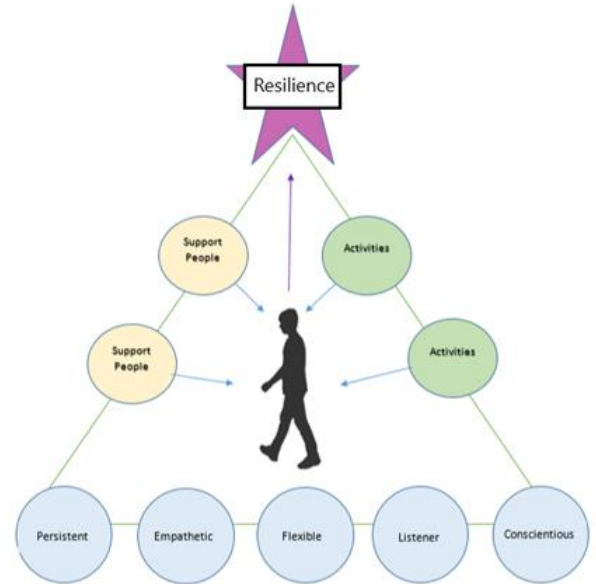
Champions for Teens: the nuts and bolts

- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer vetting:
  - 10 hours of training (poverty, trauma, mental health, advocacy, knowledge check
  - Clearances and School Board Approval
  - Makings of a Champions Survey
  - Knowledge check after training
- Access to school social worker for support
- Monthly group consultation

Champions for Teens: the nuts and bolts

- Champion and student meet and greet

- Champion meets with the student weekly for 45 minutes to an hour to complete Possible Selves in school

- Champion helps student accomplish their identified goals by:
  - Contacting the student's existing support network
  - Look for ways to **connect the student to broader community** (social capital= relationships mobilize resources)
  - Getting involved with the academic team

POSSIBLE SELVES

Nurturing Student Motivation

2ⁿᵈ Edition, 2021

Why?

An Important Goal for Learning....

"Give me a fish, and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish, and I eat for a lifetime."

Chinese Proverb

Where we often begin.....

"I don't know how to fish, and I don't care to learn. I don't even like fish. So don't bother me!"

"Non Motivated" Student

"Students are not unmotivated. However, they may not be motivated to do what we want them to do."

~Richard Lavoie

TEENS AND SELF-IMAGE: SURVEY RESULTS

Question 8. How much **influence** does each of the following have on your life?

	A lot or Some	None
Parents	96%	4%
Teacher	**80%**	**20%**
Other Kids	78%	22%
Religion	70%	30%
Girl/Boyfriend	63%	37%
Celebrities	63%	37%
TV Shows	44%	56%
Advertising	36%	64%

USA Today Annual Teen Survey (2008)

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TEENS AND SELF-IMAGE: SURVEY RESULTS

Question 5. Who understands you the most?

Friend	42%
Parent	28%
Girl/Boyfriend	10%
No one	8%
Sibling	5%
Religious Leader	1%
Teacher	**1%**
Other	5%

USA Today Annual Teen Survey (2008)

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Teacher-student Relationships Promote School Success

When teachers show they care about their students and and will help them with their success, the are more **motivated** to attend classes. And through improved student engagement, student-teacher relationships can better **academic achievement**.

When a teacher builds rapport with students and provides mentorship this is a way to prevent **chronic absenteeism.***

Teacher student relationships can correspond with social-emotional learning skills. Good teacher-student connections can cultivate **self-regulation skills**, particularly **self-determination**.** As they learn to manage their behavior, they are able to achieve their **academic and personal goals**.***

*Sheldon, S.B., and Epstein, J.L. *Getting Students to School: Using Family and Community Involvement to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism*. School Community Journal, 2004, 14(2), pp. 39-56.
**Varga, M. The Effect of Teacher-Student Relationships on the Academic Engagement of Students. Retrieved from mdsoar.org: https://mdsoar.org/bitstream/handle/11603/3893/VargaMeagan_paper.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
***Reis da Luz, F.S. The Relationship between Teachers and Students in the Classroom: Communicative Language Teaching Approach and Cooperative Learning Strategy to Improve Learning. Retrieved from bridgew.edu: https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=theses.

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What?

Possible Selves

is about listening to student stories about their hopes, expectations, and fears for the future.
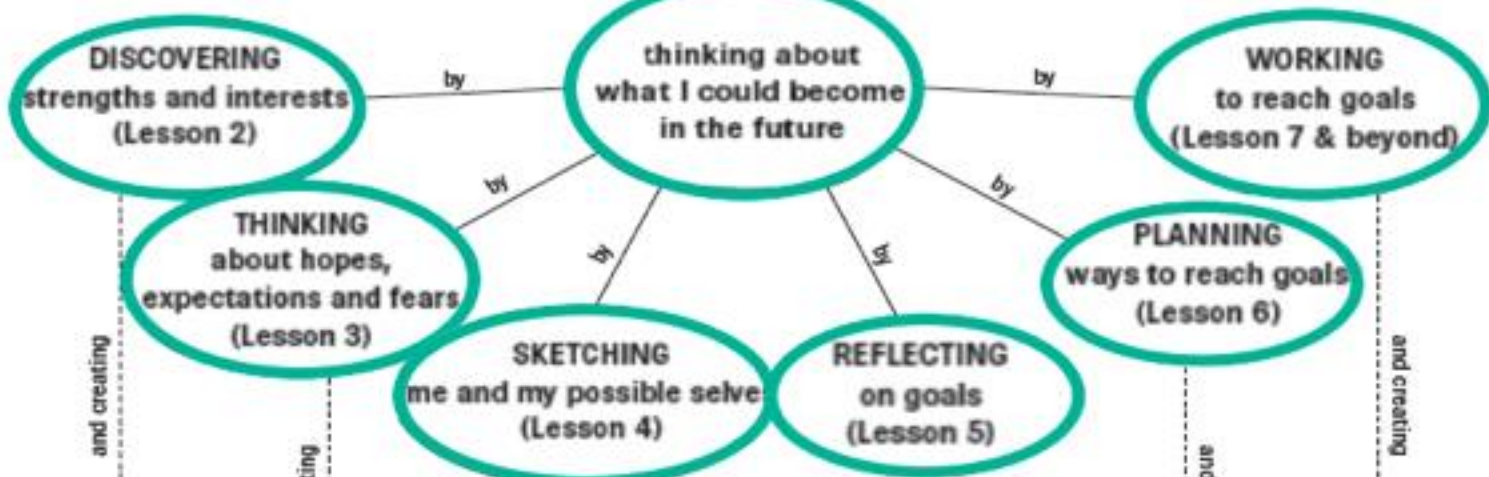
Markus & Nurris, 1986

How?

POSSIBLE SELVES

is about:

thinking about what I could become in the future

by — **DISCOVERING** strengths and interests (Lesson 2)

by — **WORKING** to reach goals (Lesson 7 & beyond)

by — **THINKING** about hopes, expectations and fears (Lesson 3)

by — **SKETCHING** me and my possible selves (Lesson 4)

by — **REFLECTING** on goals (Lesson 5)

by — **PLANNING** ways to reach goals (Lesson 6)

and creating — A portrait book of strength and interests

and creating — A Possible Selves questionnaire

and creating — A Possible Selves tree

and creating — Goals to strengthen my tree

and creating — A plan for reaching my goals

and creating — Mission statement / Prediction letter / New action plans

Possible Selves Questionnaire

Describe yourself as a _____*	Describe yourself as a LEARNER**	Describe yourself as a PERSON***	Describe yourself as a WORKER****
What are your hopes as a _____?	What are your hopes as a LEARNER?	What are your hopes as a PERSON?	What are your hopes as a WORKER?
What are your expectations as a _____?	What are your expectations as a LEARNER?	What are your expectations as a PERSON?	What are your expectations as a WORKER?
What are your fears as a _____?	What are your fears as a LEARNER?	What are your fears as a PERSON?	What are your fears as a WORKER?

Lesson 3

TRUNK →	**Whole Person**
3 Major Limbs →	Learner Person Worker *Strength Area
Branches →	Hopes and Expectations for the Future
Roots →	Words describe the student
Dangers to the Tree →	Fears

Lesson 4

Help transform passive learners
into passionate students
driven by their own
personal, career and academic
GOALS.

Where do we go from here?

- Explore greater accessibility to the Possible Selves program for advocates and for the youth and if the Possible Selves program facilitated authentic relationship building.
- Identify strategies, processes and resources needed to scope and repeat the C4T program and reach more youth.
- Determine the impact of the program on the social support, GPA, and attendance of youth.
- Determine improvement strategies.

C4T Solution Focused Collaboration

Link: https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_emREGZOYE9iKEsu

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Questions

1. Working with homeless students is very difficult and challenging. What are one or two things that keep you up at night that you would change if you could?

2. What are the key challenges or barriers to success?

3. What are the solutions?

4. Would you be interested in implementing at your agency/school?

5. To implement the program what would the following stakeholders need to know?

- Students

- Potential Champions

- School officials

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Possible Selves
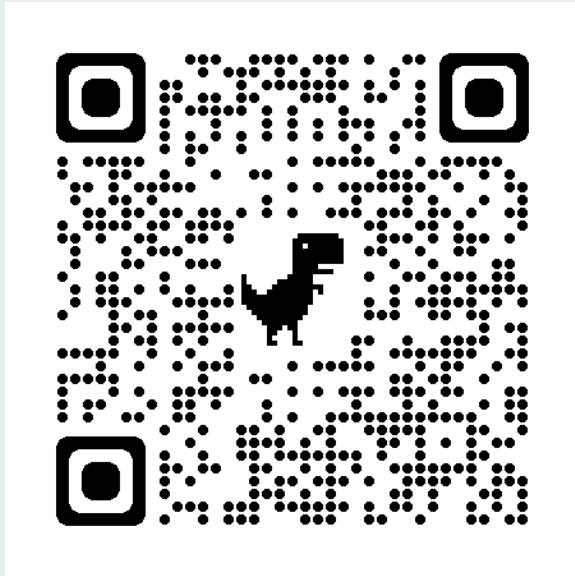
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