All Regis University Theses

Fall 2006

Starting a School-Based Peer Mentoring Program for Douglas County Partners

Jessica Summers
Regis University

Regis University
School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

Disclaimer

Running Head: Starting a School-Based Peer Mentoring Program

Starting a School-based Peer Mentoring Program for Douglas County Partners

Jessica Summers

Regis University

Table of Contents

Abstract

The school-based peer-mentoring program will address the need for youth to feel valued in their community, increase school attendance and teach social emotional skills. The high school seniors will be trained in EmoSmart Leadership curriculum and pass the knowledge on to middle school youth. Mentors will receive 30 hours of training before they meet with the middle school youth. They will meet once a week in a school setting for the entire school year. The mentoring will be on a one-to-one basis. This program will use best practices for program design. Both Mentor and mentee will benefit from their interactions. This author intends for Douglas County Partners and similar organizations to use this information to expand their mentoring programs.

Introduction

My name is Jessica Summers and I am a graduate student in the Regis University Master of Nonprofit Management program. This professional project will partially fulfill the requirements for graduation. I will refer to myself in the third person for the remainder of this paper.

The purpose of this project is to design an effective school-based peer-mentoring program. Recommendations and design elements are presented to Douglas County Partners, to assist in developing and implementing a school-based peer mentoring program. High school seniors will mentor seventh grade students for one school year. Due to time constraints this paper will not cover implementation, but will provide design elements for the program. This author also intends for other nonprofit mentoring programs serving at-risk youth to benefit from these findings.

Statement of the Problem/Background

There are 40 developmental assets that are important for child development. According to the Developmental Assets Survey of Douglas County youth, independently researched by the Search Institute (2004), there are two groups of assets. External assets are support networks, people, and opportunities that positively influence youth development.   Internal assets are the youth's own competencies, values and commitment. The results of the study are reviewed in the literature review section. One way to help youth achieve more assets is to provide more prevention programming. School-based peer - mentoring is a great way to provide prevention programming and help youth feel more valued in society.

Metro Denver Partners inspires community involvement, empowers youth to realize their potential, and creates hope for the future. The mission of Denver Youth

Program dba Metro Denver Partners is to promote a safe and growth-oriented environment in which at-risk youth can develop and flourish through: friendship and commitment; mentoring and role modeling; education and guidance; and family support. The overall goal of Metro Denver Partners is to provide youth with supportive role models and program services that will empower them to make positive life choices. Metro Denver Partners was founded in 1968 in response to a growing rate of juvenile delinquency in Denver. A small group of business leaders and community volunteers set about to provide in-trouble youth with the guidance, maturity and direction to prevent further involvement with the law and to become stable and productive members of the community.

During the Spring of 2000, Metro Denver Partners conducted an informal feasibility study regarding expansion of the program into Douglas County. The original impetus for conducting this study was due to an expressed concern for the youth of the county by several residents. As part of the study, over fifty key individuals were interviewed to ascertain the need for the program and available resources. The results demonstrated both a strong need for a mentoring program and the availability of possible resources such as funding and volunteers. A Douglas County Advisory Board has been formed to oversee implementation and ensure stability for the program. Three members of this Board serve on the Metro Denver Partners Board of Directors. Both Metro Denver Partners and Douglas County representatives are very enthusiastic and committed to ensuring the success of this effort. Implementation began in April, 2001.

Douglas County Partners is ready for expansion into school-based peer-mentoring. It is hoped that this project will help Douglas County Partners and other organizations serving at-risk youth that wish to start peer-mentoring programs. Researching and developing an effective

peer-mentoring program will allow more youth to be better served and will provide an invaluable learning experience for both parties. The effective design elements that must be included in the development of a school-based peer-mentoring program are planning, program design, school support or buy-in, screening, mentor selection, mentee selection, matching, case management and supervision and evaluation.

Literature Review

In reviewing the literature, several articles stated benefits of using peers as mentors, helpers and tutors. The benefits for the mentor and mentee were highlighted, as well as, any barriers. A few articles discussed the developmental assets and their importance on youth development. The main emphasis was placed on the program design and implementation.

Douglas County Schools administer the developmental assets survey to all ninth graders in the district every two years. The latest data is from spring, 2004. The results were prepared by the Search Institute in Minneapolis. The external assets are divided into four groups: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. A summary report prepared by the Search Institute concludes with a section on moving from awareness to action and describes what adults, families, young people and organizations can do to strengthen the assets. The report states, "organizations' can highlight, develop, expand, or support programs designed to build assets, such as mentoring, peer helping, service-learning or parent education (p.8)" (see Appendix C for complete report).

A Public/Private Ventures (2004) study states that increasing pressure on schools to improve academic performance and meet academic standards has compelled these institutions to look for ways to help students succeed. Mentoring could help fill this

need. It provides youth with one-on-one attention and has a proven track record of bolstering youth's academic performance. "This need has contributed to the development of school-based approaches to mentoring. It offers schools a low cost way to help youth succeed" (p.2). This study found that youth benefit both academically and socially from school-based mentoring programs. For example, a recent study by Big Brother Big Sister of America shows decrease in grade retention and tardiness, as well as improvements in attendance, grades and classroom participation (Hansen, 2001).   One concern about school-based mentoring programs is that school based matches may focus most of their time together on academics at the expense of developing a close social relationship- the heart of mentoring and the basis for impacts seen in community-based mentoring. This was not the case in the programs studied. "About half of the mentors reported spending some time on homework, 85% reported spending time in social activities, and about a third reported attending school activities, such as sporting events or assemblies" (p.10).

Quigley (2004) states, "Successful peer helping or peer group treatment interventions for at-risk youth engage the curative power of some primary child development strategies. Coaching at-risk adolescents to help others has been a primary therapeutic tool in peer helping programs for over 50 years. High and moderate risk youth can benefit greatly from programs that utilize key child development strategies imbedded in the practice of helping others" (p. 134).   Helping others develops strengths and assets. The thrust of peer helping ideology is to teach young people to become more productive and positive in their social interactions. Having the ability to develop and maintain relationships is seen as an important strength. A well operated peer-helping program designed to teach strengths and resiliencies will help its participants build

constructive relationships. "Emphasis on building the assets and strengths of a young person is a much healthier practice than pouring hours into the analysis of problematic behaviors and traits"(p. 136). Assets are basic common sense ideas like family support, honesty, self-esteem, and the ability to care about other people's feelings (Benson, Galbraith, & Espeland, 1998).

Chimes (1990) states, "one strategy for addressing the affective development of middle school students involves using high school seniors as peer leaders or peer counselors. The end result is a group of middle school students who are supported, cared for, and more secure" (p. 8). The article outlines a similar program at Gill St. Bernard School. After peer leaders are chosen, they go through an orientation before the school year begins. This orientation has several goals. "It should help peer leaders understand their role as leaders to middle school youngsters, and set clear guidelines about how to deal with crises" (p. 8). The article also addresses the benefits of a peer-counseling program. The benefits can actually improve high school dropout rates at some schools and can undoubtedly create a more adjusted and successful middle school population in most schools. "One student offered simple, definitive comments on positive peer leadership: a peer leader has to really want to do it; a peer leader should be someone others can look up to; a peer leader has to know how to listen and how to speak; a peer leader has to be a friend; a peer leader must not act superior; and a peer leader must have good advice" (p. 9). The author states he is hard pressed to improve on the attributes the student considered critical.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2002) study emphasizes using a partnership by design plan for starting a school-based program that includes four steps.

First, define the goals and outcomes for this effort, including both immediate and future directions, and describe the means you will use to attain those goals. Second, outline the details of the roles each partner will play in helping reach the overall educational goals. Third, anticipate potential barriers along the way and formulate responses to them. Fourth, identify strategies to evaluate the success of the partnerships in meeting the planned goals, and formulate a process to advertise findings and regularly revise the plan (p.4). When creating school-based programs that require family involvement or consent, one of the major, unresolved issues is how to reach families considered "hard to reach." Educators often label parents of at-risk students as hard to reach and cite social or economic conditions as the cause. "When educators speak of disadvantaged or "hard to reach" families, they are referring to the families that are seldom seen by the school staff, but many have in mind such characteristics as: minority background, low socioeconomic status, public housing occupancy, little formal education, single-parent households and English language learners. Family members who reflect such characteristics often state that one of the biggest problems they have interacting with school staff are the assumptions made about their families and children. They would like the school staff to ask before assuming" (pp.9-10). The study also reflects on the way students feel about adults and peers. Middle years are difficult for young people. This is a stage filled with growing peer pressure, dramatic physical changes, and an awakening need for more independence. The youth begin to weigh choices and consequences, make more decisions on their own, learn from their mistakes, establish their own set of values to guide their decisions and actions, and begin seeking help from peers (p.20). This age group is open to the idea of learning from peers.

The National Peer Helpers Association (NPHA) website lists programmatic standards for a peer helping program. The checklist includes three major components of successful program development and management. First, is the program start-up, which includes planning, commitment, staffing and organizational structure. Second, is program implementation, which includes screening and selection, training, service delivery and supervision. Third, is program maintenance, which includes evaluation, public relations and long-range planning (NHPA standards, n.d.).

Methodology

To obtain more information on the elements of a successful school-based peer mentoring program, the author interviewed a variety of professionals in the field of mentoring and education. All professionals were interviewed to ascertain if there is a need for a school-based peer-mentoring program in Douglas County or to gain advice and recommendations for effective program design and implementation. An informal needs assessment was conducted verbally. The level of formality for a needs assessment should be determined by the structure and stability of the organization implementing the program. The key individuals interviewed range from the Executive Director of Metro Denver Partners to the Superintendent of Douglas County Schools. The interviews contained valuable information and great recommendations.

Mary Ann Burdick, Executive Director, Metro Denver Partners was interviewed to discuss the possible expansion of the Douglas County Partners program. The importance of a needs assessment was emphasized, as well as, the best practices approach to program design. M. Burdick suggested speaking with the superintendent of Douglas

County Schools to assess the need (M. Burdick, personal communication, February 15, 2006).

Carlos Kriekels, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the YESS Institute was interviewed because he has started similar school based peer-mentoring programs in Denver and Jefferson Public Schools. The YESS Institute was founded to provide training to parents, teachers, mentors, youth, schools, youth serving agencies, non-profit executives and staff. YESS stands for Youth Empowerment Support Services. They offer a variety of trainings from EmoSmart Leadership to How to Avoid Burnout.

The YESS Institute started a pilot school based peer-mentoring program in 2003. A member of the board brought the idea to the table. Her daughter thought of the idea and made it happen. In the first year, Highlands Ranch High School seniors traveled by bus to Morey Middle School in Denver. The seniors were paired up with a middle school youth and spent an hour and fifteen minutes together two times a week for one semester. They used the EmoSmart curriculum and started to teach skills and new ways to cope with difficult situations. EmoSmart teaches emotional intelligence. C. Kriekels briefly defined emotional intelligence, "as the ability to monitor feelings and emotions of others and use the information to guide our thinking and actions" (personal communication, February 18, 2006). He explained that after the initial year, they decided to change the schedule and have the mentors meet with students once a week for a full school year.

Seniors got involved and became mentors after school counselors told them about the opportunity. They kept applications in the office for anyone to request. After a potential mentor turned in the application, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire that listed strengths and weaknesses and then an interview was scheduled with C. Kriekels

from the YESS Institute. After the mentors were selected, their parents had to sign a consent form for them to participate in the program. Before the school year started, the mentors met for two days of EmoSmart Leadership training from the YESS Institute.

The middle school students were selected by their school counselors or teachers and a letter was sent home to the parents explaining the program, inviting them to a parent night to learn more. At the parent night, parents were asked to sign consent forms for their child to participate in the mentoring program. During the program, the mentors and those being mentored receive supervision from a teacher or counselor at the school and someone from the YESS Institute. C. Kriekels said, "the students sought approval from their peers and trust developed fast" (personal communication, February 18, 2006). The mentors are not allowed to spend time with the students alone or outside of the school setting. At the end of the program there is a graduation ceremony.

This model has been implemented in several schools in Denver and Jefferson County. C. Kriekels said they might try mentoring elementary aged students next. He said they are flexible and can adapt the program to fit with the school and the community. They gathered some great results from the pilot program.   They evaluated the participants through pre and post-tests. Here are the results:

Table 1 - Social Emotional Skills for Middle School Students

Question	pre-test	post-test
identifying triggers/hot buttons	62%	86%
identifying ways to stay cool in conflict	37%	86%
identifying 4 ways to stay cool in difficult situations	4%	59%
identifying ways to set boundaries	0%	41%
avoid fighting	46%	64%

Table 2 - School Attitude of the Middle School Students

Question	pre-test	post-test
important to succeed in school	63%	96%
very important to succeed in school	36%	77%
improve self confidence	n/a	86%
did mentor teach or give advice	n/a	82%
trust mentor completely	9%	59%
will make changes because of what was learned	n/a	91%
glad they participated	n/a	100%
learned something new	n/a	100%

Note. Adapted from "Tuesdays with Morey Mentoring Survey Results," by Carlos Kriekles, 2003. Retrieved Feb. 18, 2006 from http://wwwwessinstitute.org/achievements

C. Kriekels said they will continue to implement the program and make changes as they go along. He said they have made several changes since the pilot program and they keep learning. Learning as you go has been one of his biggest challenges (personal communication, February 18, 2006). The YESS Institute does not have a large staff to facilitate each program, so much is left up to the school. He said they are flexible because they want the school to support the program. They are now in the process of making the Youth Mentor Leadership program into a best practice program that can be implemented state-wide. After speaking with Carlos and reviewing the evaluation results, it was decided that Douglas County Partners plans to collaborate with the YESS

Institute for training. The YESS Institute provides great training and their unique EmoSmart Leadership curriculum would benefit the youth in Douglas County.

Conchita Tamondong, MSW, school-based therapist for Community Reach Center was interviewed and asked what she thought was the most important advice for someone who wants to start a school-based program. C. Tamondong said, "the school support and belief in the program will make all the difference. Educating the school, the administration and anyone involved will make for a smooth implementation. In my experience, starting a new program in a school will be met with opposition from teachers if they have to do more paperwork or it changes the schedule" (C. Tamondong, personal communication, March 15, 2006).

Jim Christensen, Superintendent of Douglas County Schools was interviewed to assess the need of a school-based peer-mentoring program. He stated that there is a need and he will support the author and Douglas County Partners in any way possible (J. Christensen, personal communication, March 23, 2006). J. Christensen agreed with the author, that the Parker area has shown signs of need. He suggested talking with Janet Laning-Krug about the potential schools and asking her to sit in on the meetings. He said once the schools are narrowed down he will call the principals and tell them he is in support of the program (J. Christensen, personal communication, March 23, 2006).

Carla Turner, Program Manager for the Douglas County Youth Initiative stated there was a need for this type of program in Douglas County. The Douglas County Youth Initiative works with all youth serving agencies in Douglas County to create unification of services. C. Turner emphasized the fact that it would be a free service to the school and they would have more buy-in if it did not conflict with regular class

schedules. She suggested meeting with Janet Laning-Krug, Director of Douglas County

Support Center, to collect specific data (C. Turner, personal communication, March 16,

2006).

Janet Laning-Krug, Director of the Douglas County Support Center stated there

was a need for a school-based peer mentoring program in Douglas County. She wrote a

grant for funding and started the DC Support Center for students expelled from Douglas

County schools. J. Laning-Krug provided specific data for a high school and middle

school that could benefit from this type of program and said she will help with the

implementation process (J. Laning-Krug, personal communication, April 5, 2006).

There are certain elements that must be included in the initial stages of planning

and carried through all the way to implementation. These elements are planning,

program design, assessing the need, selection of mentors, screening, training, selection of

mentees, matching, case management and evaluation. Many of these elements are

standardized already within the Partners Mentoring Association Accredidation Standards.

These standards apply to all Metro Denver Partners programs, including Douglas County

Partners. Only a few changes need to be made to implement a school-based peer-

mentoring program.

Mentor Selection. High school seniors can become peer mentors in two different

ways. One, they can be recommended or referred by school personnel. Two, there will

be an open application process, so they can apply if interested. After an application is

received, the high school mentor schedules an interview with the program coordinator. A

standard set of questions will be used. The potential mentor will need to undergo a

background check and submit 2 references. A parental consent form will also need to be

signed. If the potential mentor is not referred or recommended to the program, a school

staff person will need to be identified as a reference for the student.

Student/Mentee Selection. A Public/Private Ventures (2005) study states, "selling

principals on a program's outcomes and offerings is vital, as is connecting with school

staff who work most closely with youth, particularly underperforming youth.

Specifically asking school staff to identify and refer youth to the program is critical, and

there are numerous ways to encourage referrals" (p.12).

Recruitment of seventh graders for the program will entail three steps. First,

meeting with the school principal, counselor, social workers and psychologists to explain

the program and referral process. Second, after a student is referred to the program, the

program coordinator schedules an interview with the student and parent or guardian to

determine appropriateness for program participation. Third, a consent form needs to be

signed by the parent or guardian, giving their permission for program participation. Eve

Matching. The mentors and mentees will be matched together based on similar

interests and appropriate academic skill level. The Partners mentoring model matches all

mentors and mentees based on common ground. This same approach applies to the

school-based program. "Youth who feel their mentor takes their preferences and interests

into account are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than

are youth who feel their mentor is less interested in them" (Grossman and Johnson,

1999).

Training. Douglas County Partners will collaborate with the YESS Institute for

training. The YESS Institute has developed EmoSmart training through their youth

mentor leadership program.   The program aims to improve school attendance,

academics and school behavior. All students involved promise to fully commit for one school year to all required classes and trainings. The high school mentors receive 30-hours of training in EmoSmart Leadership, service learning and coaching before and during the program. The training focuses on teaching social and emotional skills. The middle school students meet once a week with their personal high school mentor. The high school seniors teach interactive social emotional skills to the middle school students. (See Appendix B for full training curriculum).

Evaluation. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2002) study states that determining acceptable evidence for evaluation includes: "describing the evidence you will need to show that you are reaching your goals; planning the types of tools you will use along the way to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and see if you are meeting your goals, and improve your plans and activities; describing how all partners will participate in these assessments; formulating a process to continually improve practices; and creating plans for advertising your successes to family and community members" (p. 28).

Partners mentoring programs use pre and post-tests to evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring. During 2004, pre and post-tests of the Partners Mentoring Services Effectiveness Index (PMSEI) Version 2, were analyzed by OMNI Research and Training. A total of 232 from all Partners Affiliates and forty-six (46) from Metro Denver Partners were in this analysis. Metro Denver Partners achieved the following results: positive, statistically significant change in 3 scales – self-reported delinquency, past 30-day alcohol use and bonding with an adult other than a family member. August 1, 2006, the PMSEI Version 3 will be implemented. Two new scales have been added, including

school grades and self-efficacy instead of self-esteem. There are separate instruments for youth under 12 years of age and youth over 12. A more detailed protocol for administration has also been developed. These changes were developed from input from Partners' case managers and research staff at OMNI Research and Training which continues to oversee the evaluation effort.

The PMSEI results prove that mentoring is effective. Since the school-based peer mentoring will be a program of Douglas County Partners, an evaluation tool will be used. A new instrument will be designed for the mentors and mentees. This instrument will be designed at a later date, before implementation. A pre-test will be given to mentors and mentees before the peer mentoring program begins and a post-test will be given at the end of the school year. The tests will be analyzed for results. The findings will be shared with the schools involved and will serve as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

<div align="center">Results and Discussion</div>

Many agree that school-based peer-mentoring is an effective way to reach youth and make a difference. All of the interviews offered valuable information. One of the main themes stated several times are the importance of school buy-in to the program, maintaining the regular school schedule and not increasing more paper work for teachers. School buy-in is achievable with the proper planning before implementation. Several of the individuals interviewed offered good advice, recommendations and suggested other professionals to interview for more information. Everyone shared information openly and gave suggestions for other avenues of research and information.

The literature review stated the similar themes. The essential elements of program design were mentioned in several publications. The emphasis on proper planning, screening, training, matching, case management and evaluation is consistent with all of the research. The benefits outlined in the literature review, prove that a school-based peer-mentoring program benefits both parties involved. Research indicates that peer mentoring and peer helping positively impact academic achievement, self-esteem, and help reduce the alienation that many youth feel. These issues can lead to greater problems such as, dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy, violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

All of the recommendations and advice have been taken into consideration. At this point, more effort needs to be placed on the timeframe for implementation. The research will continue past this paper and into the implementation stage. At this point, the only obstacle is time. School ends soon and several meeting need to be lined up for implementation to go smoothly.

<div style="text-align:center">Summary, Conclusions, and Implications</div>

The main lessons learned are the importance of program elements and design such as planning, needs assessment, mentor selection, orientation, training, screening, ongoing case management, and evaluation. In conclusion, if all elements of an effective mentoring program are in place for a school-based peer mentoring program, success is achievable. A new program should not be implemented without proper research, program design and a needs assessment. The implications of this program will affect the youth of Douglas County and expand Douglas County Partners. The community will benefit from youth learning positive ways to deal with conflict and learning how to

interact with positive role models. The results of an effective school-based peer-

mentoring program prove that lives can be changed by a positive influence. The

information gathered will be used to expand the scope of services to youth in Douglas

County.

References

Chimes, Michael: *Peer Leadership and Middle School*. Independent School. Vol. 49 (3)
      Spring 1990. pp. 8-9.

Developmental Assets: A Profile of your Youth, Douglas County Schools. Search
      Institute. July 2004.

Ellis, Debbie; Hughes, Kendra: *Partnerships by Design: Cultivating Effective and
      Meaningful School-Family-Community Partnerships.* Northwest Regional
      Educational Library. October 2002. pp. 4, 9, 10, 20

Grossman, Jean; Walker, Karen; Raley, Rebecca: *Getting it Right: Strategies for After-
      School Success*. Public/Private Ventures. 2004.

Herrera, Carla: *School-Based Mentoring A Closer Look.* Public/Private Ventures.
      December 2004.

Herrera, Carla: *A First look Into Its Potential: School-Based Mentoring: What and Why.*
      Public/Private Ventures. September 1999.

Krieckels, Carlos (2005). Retrieved January 24, 2006 from http://www.yessinstitute.org

Latham, Andrew: *Peer Counseling: Proceed with Caution.* Educational Leadership.
      Vol. 55 (2) October 1997. pp. 77-79.

Quigley, Richard: *Positive Peer Groups: "Helping Others" Meets Primary
      Developmental Needs.* Reclaiming Children & Youth. Vol. 13 (3) Fall 2004
      pp.134-137

Appendix A

Professionals Interviewed

Mary Ann Burdick
Executive Director
Metro Denver Partners
February 15, 2006

Jim Christensen
Superintendent
Douglas County School District
March 23, 2006

Carlos Kriekels
Co-founder and Executive Director
YESS Institute
February 18, 2006

Janet Laning-Krug
Director
Douglas County Support Center
April 5, 2006

Conchita Tamondong
MSW, School-based therapist
Community Reach Center
March 15, 2006

Carla Turner
Program Manager
Douglas County Youth Initiative
March 16, 2006

Appendix B

EmoSmart Leadership Curriculum 10 Steps

EmoSmart Leadership Curriculum integrates the essential emotional intelligence skills to create trust, choice and positive impact in relationships.

1. **Leadership is Positive Role Modeling**- the wheel of positive role modeling demonstrates the impact and connection of role modeling to leadership.

2. **Dysfunctional Behavioral Dynamics- Every day un-positive role modeling**- we all respond every day thousands of times when communicating with others. Are you aware of all your responses and how they impact your communication? In order to understand others, we must first become aware of our own instinctive responses in moments of conflict.

3. **Digging Deeper- What drives behavior?** Now that you have gained insight into different behavioral dysfunctional dynamics, the course will take you into the next level of EmoSmart Leadership: The Hot Buttons. These core beliefs drive our thoughts, perception of self, others and behavior itself. They determine who you are and how others perceive you. They determine to great extent if you will be successful. Awareness of your Hot Buttons provides you great insight into what is holding you back and how to overcome.

4. **Emotional management- The unrelenting influence of emotions on behavior** Emotional Intelligence requires deep insight into the influence of emotions on what we do and how we think. The YESS Institute's leadership teachings perceive emotional management as a cornerstone to successful role modeling and effective leadership. Emotions are the gasoline, the fuel that drives us.

5. **Relationship Creature- Insight into the unwritten, underlying dynamics that determine the success or failure of relationships**. When two people communicate, they have a relationship. Relationships are determined by unseen, unwritten laws that determine the outcome of the communications. This class teaches students to take accountability and responsibility for their invisible contribution to relationships.

6. **Agreements- Boundaries broken down into cellular components.** Setting boundaries is common sense. How to do that productively is less obvious. Agreements are the molecules that make or break boundaries. Are you aware of all the unspoken, behavioral agreements you have with others. You may have spoken agreements that contradict your behavioral agreements. Guess which agreement others will pick up on?

7. **Effective verbal confrontation: A skill that distinguishes true leaders**. Confrontation brings the fight or flight response out of people. Some people never do it, others love to be in your face. None is effective or productive. True leaders know that successful relationships require constant confrontation. They confront others because they care about the relationship. Running away or attacking is not caring. You will learn the skill and the exact wording for different real life scenarios.

8. **The wheel of caring- the foundation of effective teamwork.** This class combines and connects all the former classes into one coherent teaching. It provides insight into how the learned lessons fit into a puzzle: the wheel of caring.

9. **The paradox of caring for others.**   It seems a paradox that caring for others is built upon caring for self. The wheel of burnout shows the consequences when caring for self is missing. Nobody benefits. It is an art and discipline to nurture self without judgment.

10. **The power of acknowledgement as a key aspect to a leader with EQ.**   Giving is receiving. Receiving means being open to acknowledgement of others. It also requires being able to acknowledge self- the hardest task of all. The "Windows of the Soul" exercise opens our eyes to who others really are (Kriekels, 2005, Leadership Curriculum section, para. 2).