

Sixth Grade Life Skills School Groups Program Evaluation Plan

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**Information in developing this Guide was taken directly from the Smith (2010)
“Handbook of Program Evaluation” Textbook**

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Your social work program evaluation plan should follow the table of contents below, with **every section being addressed in your mid-term paper.**

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Sixth Grade Life Skills School Groups Program Evaluation Plan

DESCRIBING THE PROGRAM

(Smith Textbook pages 81-138)

Overview of the Program

The Larchmont-Mamaroneck Community Counseling Center (LMCCC) is a nonprofit Substance Abuse Prevention agency under OASAS (Office of Addiction Services and Supports), and is the only agency dedicated exclusively to the Mamaroneck School District. The LMCCC primarily functions as a counseling center, strongly focusing on prevention and through a variety of services and programs, such as counseling and population-specific groups. The primary target population of the LMCCC are youth and adolescents, and the agency actively partners with local schools to provide prevention groups directly to classes and students.

The LMCCC works with Hommocks Middle School to provide In-School ‘Life Skills’ Groups to sixth and seventh graders. The In-School Groups are an Evidence-Based Prevention and Counseling program at Hommocks Middle School utilizing the Botvin Life Skills© Curriculum. School Groups rotate internally with clinicians assigned a school period, meeting with the same class for 8 sessions, twice a week to complete the ‘Life Skills’ curriculum.

The sixth grade curriculum covers mindfulness, communication, and eventually, substance-use. The focus is on safe-consumption for age-appropriate items, and explaining risks of unsafe consumption. The seventh grade curriculum goes beyond substances to train students in emotional regulation. The purpose of the School Groups are two-fold, one is prevention, the other is exposure to the counseling center for students that might not necessarily need counseling services or would not have access due to varied barriers to services.

Sixth Grade Life Skills School Groups Setting & Location

The Sixth Grade Life Skills Program is located inside the Library (or a classroom) of Hommocks Middle School. In consideration of the LMCCC being specifically for the Mamaroneck school district and concerning the agency's target population, the program in theory, is accessible to its targeted consumers. Classes and periods are rotated through a cycle throughout the year to ensure as much access and facetime with all students in the school.

In terms of organizational structure, our Executive Director, Dr. Mark Levy established partnerships within the Village of Mamaroneck including the local schools. Christina Grimes, LCSW as the Supervisor of School Groups and Curriculum Development, provides the training, curriculum, and supervision for all of the LMCCC clinicians involved in the School Groups. Alongside Christina Grimes, there is Beryl Vincequerra, LMSW as the School Groups Coordinator—I am not entirely sure of the structural organization between Beryl and Christina, but the liaison and spokesperson during staff meetings for School Groups is Beryl.

Sixth Grade Life Skills School Groups Logic Model

Program Inputs (or Resources)	Program Activities (or Interventions)	Outputs (Direct Products from Activities)	Short-Term Outcomes (or Goals)	Intermediate Outcomes (or Goals)	Long-Term Outcomes (or Goals)
<p>School Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Guidance Counseling Team • School Librarian <p>Instructors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMCCC Counseling Staff • LCSW Supervisor of School Groups and Curriculum Development • LMSW Coordinator of School Groups <p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OASAS Funding <p>Space/Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Library • School Computer/Wi-Fi • Display Screen • 8 Cycles of 8-Week Curriculum • Presentations • Activities 	<p>Teach ‘Life Skills’ Curriculum for 8 sessions to a dedicated middle school class period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Living: Mindfulness & Communication • Prevention Education: Safe/Harmful Substances & Safe Use <p>Facilitate safe spaces for students to ask questions and be educated.</p> <p>Develop Age-Appropriate program curriculum including presentations and activities.</p> <p>Build Partnerships with local school and local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce LMCCC to students and connect with guidance counselors for referrals. 	<p>2 to 3 middle school classes/periods receive prevention education 2x/week for 8 weeks.</p> <p>Each session includes new topic presentation, discussions, and activities, covering but not limited to: caffeine, alcohol, uncontrolled substances.</p> <p>By end of school year (6/2023), 22 middle school classes would have received substance abuse prevention education.</p>	<p>Increase student knowledge and awareness of safe and harmful substance use.</p> <p>Educate on long-term effects of utilization of certain services in a non-judgmental way.</p> <p>Increase student knowledge and awareness of counseling services and resources.</p> <p>Provide access to mental health services and resources.</p>	<p>Improve substance abuse outcomes for youth and adolescents of Mamaroneck school district.</p> <p>Student safe practice of substances (safe and uncontrolled.)</p> <p>Student accesses preventive/mental health services at an earlier stage (prior to onset of addiction/substance-abuse disorder.)</p> <p>Increased buy-in of various stakeholders for prevention programs.</p>	<p>Decreased harmful use of substances within adolescent stage.</p> <p>Increased participation of students in counseling services for preventive purposes.</p> <p>Increased partnership with other adolescent-focused institutions and agencies to provide prevention programs.</p> <p>Increased buy-in and funding for program development and prevention services.</p> <p>Increased education and awareness of needs required for healthy living.</p>

Program Consumers, Clients, & Patients Served

The LMCCC's focus population are youth and adolescents, specifically for substance abuse prevention. Clients of the LMCCC can access group and/or individual services. However, in order to access services at the LMCCC, clients have to meet specific criterion as described by the intake form and intake process. For example, all clients are required to be local to Larchmont-Mamaroneck, limited to specific zip codes and catchment areas. Clients have to be experiencing some form of interpersonal and/or family relational issues; they also have to exhibit behaviors that differ from the client's norm as observed by the client themselves or by the client's guardian.

For individual services, the agency primarily receives youth and adolescent clients (aged 11 and up), as well as families and family-systems. The agency would potentially receive a younger client if the case involved siblings/sibling relations integrally affecting the family system. Clients aged 22 and up unrelated to adolescent family-systems are able to access services at the LMCCC, however, the structure and guidelines are different. For example, clients aged 22 and up can only be seen during the daytime hours because afternoon and evening hours are reserved for school-aged students as OASAS clients.

For group services, the agency sees adolescents for group counseling, DBT groups, as well as workshops and classes for parents and families. The LMCCC works towards being an active part of the Larchmont-Mamaroneck community. The clinicians host talks at schools about parenting and connection, and also host interfaith talks about the connected dynamics and commonalities faith can have to compassionate practice. Lastly, the LMCCC does prevention work by going directly into local schools to provide skills and information for students to make informed decisions.

Although the specific program being evaluated for the purposes of this Program Evaluation is the Sixth Grade Life Skills School Group(s). The Life Skills groups involves implementation of three

programs targeting Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Graders. The purpose of the groups being substance abuse prevention through direct clinical exposure, presentation of information and education.

Characteristics of Program Staff

There are a number of staff involved in the Sixth Grade Life Skills Groups. Clinicians enter different school periods of the day, some work alone, some work in pairs. There is a point person from the middle school's guidance counselor team who is the liaison between the agency and the school, and the librarian supports the program technologically.

There are 8 LMCCC staff/interns involved in this program including two LCSW's, three LMSW's, one MFTT, MFT intern, and MSW intern. One of the LCSW's is the Supervisor of School Groups, the other is a Staff Supervisor and Intake Coordinator. One of the LMSW's is the Coordinator of School Groups as well as a psychotherapist, the other two are Staff Psychotherapists. All or the majority of staff were previous interns at the LMCCC and have been connected for a number of years. The program staff are predominantly White/Caucasian, there is a Latina clinician, and the intern is racially East Asian.

Program Cost and Funding

Information at the moment, unknown.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(Smith Textbook pages 163-203)

Program Goal # 1: “The goal of all prevention work is to increase awareness and practice of healthy coping in a student’s life, and decrease potential risk factors that may contribute to later substance use and/or abuse, and other unhealthy risk-taking behaviors” (“In School Programs,” n.d.).

- **Objective #1:** To equip the entire sixth grade (approximately 300 students) with better coping methods through Session 1: Mindfulness.

- **Objective #2:** To increase awareness of prevention services by providing resources about the counseling center from sixth grade, as they’re transitioning from elementary school.

Program Goal # 2: “Helps students develop the skills necessary to foster self-esteem, increase communication and decision-making skills, and promote heightened awareness of the impact of alcohol, nicotine and caffeine on a developing body and brain” (“In School Programs,” n.d.).

- **Objective #1:** To prepare the entire sixth grade (approximately 300 students) to communicate effectively and tangibly experience varied experiences of communication via Session 1 & Session 2: Mindfulness + Communication.

- **Objective #2:** To educate sixth grade students on different substances, its effects, and safe/unsafe uses.

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of the Evaluation (Smith Textbook pages 29-55)

The formative evaluation chosen to evaluate the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Community Counseling Center's Sixth Grade Life Skills School Groups is a Outcome Evaluation. According to Smith (2010), outcome evaluations is a research approach which measures outcomes and whether a particular goal was achieved. Outcome Evaluation was chosen as the method of program evaluation as the Sixth Grade Life Skills Group because this program measures students' responses through a self-report.

Though the sample size is the targeted group, the agency (and/or) clinician would determine the effectiveness of the program, or the effectiveness of program lesson/session by the level of participation and ability to retain important points in a review. The program also aims to gauge its effectiveness by asking the targeted population to self-report at the end of the program whether the program was useful to themselves. Unfortunately, due to the Life Skills Groups being a relatively short-term program with no longitudinal study or extensive period of data collection, the program has to be evaluated based on whether the program reached its own objectives and goals. Which is why, an Outcome Evaluation would be the most effective evaluation method for this particular program.

As previously mentioned, the in-school groups were designed as a prevention program—informing and empowering students to take in the information presented, to have discussions, and to ask questions. There is the sample population is the targeted population, and there is no longitudinal study to measure outcomes beyond student self-reporting at the moment. My research question in response would be: *What protective factors develop for sixth grade students after implementation of the Sixth Grade Life Skills Group (prevention program)?*

Stakeholders Engagement (Smith Textbook pages 66-68)

There are a number of stakeholders invested in the outcomes of this evaluation. The Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) would be a major one, the local schools would be another one, and of course, the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Community Counseling Center, and all involved parties within the LMCCC.

First, the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) would be invested in the outcomes of this evaluation. OASAS is the funding source for this program—a program for substance abuse prevention in early adolescent stage students. In order to determine if the LMCCC should continually be funded for this program, it would be a reasonable hypothesis to expect OASAS' interest in the evaluation. Though there would be no immediate way to measure if the prevention was effective in the Larchmont-Mamaroneck area until future data reveals those outcomes, the funding agency would at least be able to assess the reach of the program pending on the number of students that participated in the programs in schools.

The schools and the schools' guidance staff and its executive staff would be another major stakeholder.

Being that the program is dependent on access to local schools, the school would have to determine if the program is valuable or effective enough to allow its implementation. The school's guidance team has to decide and agree upon the necessity of the program, the executive leadership also has to conclude the value of the program. Given that the schools allot a school period for these classes to happen, it can be expected for the school to also formulate or request a means of assessing the effectiveness of the Sixth Grade Life Skills Group.

Last but not least, within the schools, the students (though they do not get initial say in participation) are significant in reviewing the usefulness of the program. If the (self-reported) results

suggest that the program is inadequate in its aim—its reach will be disregarded as it no longer remains an effective measurement. They potentially are one of the more “politically” dominant stakeholder in the sense that they are the source of data for program evaluation, they are the service-recipients.

The Larchmont-Mamaroneck Community Counseling Center would be an obvious stakeholder for a number of reasons. The LMCCC is at the center of the funding agency (OASAS), the schools, the students, and of course, the program developers and implementers. Although there are many factors that could prevent the LMCCC from executing programs, if the LMCCC did not offer a specific program, there aren't enough agencies to pursue program implementation with.

The Sixth Grade Life Skills Group belongs to the agency, and a major factor of meeting the OASAS's standard as a substance abuse prevention agency is to serve the community through prevention education. Since funding is contingent on the agency's prevention work to youth and adolescents, the continuation of the program would hinge on the OASAS's partnership, hence the evaluation of the program would be of significant interest.

The LMCCC School Groups Supervisor and Coordinator, as a central liaison between many different stakeholders are at the center of the program's value and effectiveness. LMCCC staff as well would be important stakeholders under the umbrella of the LMCCC as they are the ones directly overseeing and are the ones actively disseminating information and interacting with students, they are also the ones receiving curriculum and teaching it so they would have a say in its effectiveness.

Stakeholders for this program have one common interest, which is effectiveness. All of the stakeholders would be interested in the effectiveness of the program as for each stakeholder, it provides significant outcomes and data for continuation of program. All stakeholders would also be invested in data collection, data interpretation, and receiving results (though LMCCC would be providing those results). The OASAS also is an external reviewer and would potentially and most likely be looking from a

cost angle as well. The school staff would potentially interpret findings and collect data (or potentially interpret data from the LMCCC for the school's context and purposes). Students would not be receiving results or interpreting data. The LMCCC holds the responsibility of being the planning team, collecting data, and interpreting findings. The School Groups Supervisor, Coordinator, the student's Supervisor, and potentially the Executive Director would also be receiving results.