

## Things to Consider – Grades 6-8

### Time/Frequency

- Recommended time for adolescents is a 45-50 minute class period. Optimal frequency is two sessions per week.
- Introduction of new skills. A second skill should be introduced only when students can recall the steps of the previous skill, have had an opportunity to role-play it, and have shown some initial generalization of learning outside the teaching setting. Therefore it may be necessary to spend several sessions on one skill.

### Setting

- The greater the similarity between the teaching setting and the real-world or application setting, the greater the likelihood that the student will actually perform the skill outside of the instructional setting. So, whenever possible have the session in a setting where the desired skill is typically exercised. (ex. hallway, cafeteria, school bus, playground)

### Participants

- When possible, selecting participants from a common peer group will not only make role-play more realistic, but will also increase the likelihood that the students will attempt the skill with peers in the classroom or neighborhood.
- Usual recommended group size for adolescents is 6-8. However, smaller numbers (as few as two) may be necessary if the youth involved are very aggressive and out of control. In these situations you might start with a smaller group size and increase membership at the rate of one new member per week as the group comes under control and a positive group culture begins to build.

### Materials

- Whiteboard or easel pad, skill cards and skill-step posters are needed.
- Props for role plays can be helpful when appropriate

### Generalization

- Generalization failure is much more the rule than the exception with many students so attend to factors that up the odds of generalization.
- It's helpful if all school staff are familiar with the skills and there are visible reminders throughout the school.
- Parental involvement can enhance skill usage and generalization.
- Periodic review of previously learned skills reinforces the skills and encourages their use in new situations.

### Other factors

- Whenever possible, have two adults – one to teach and one to facilitate participation and appropriate behavior. Also, it's helpful to have two adults to do the modeling of the skill. Having two adults is particularly helpful during the first several group sessions.
- Be aware of cultural differences. Validate cultural background, making sure students understand that certain situations will call for different responses, not that their current (or family) way of doing things is inferior.