

Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum New York City Gifting Initiative

Overcoming Obstacles is a provider of evidenced-based curricula and training to help educators teach the life skills that middle and high school students need to lead successful lives. The Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum helps students achieve academic goals, attain leadership skills, develop personal life skills, determine career goals, learn how to make a difference in their communities, and reach their full potential.

The New York City Gifting Initiative has provided Overcoming Obstacles resources at no cost to middle schools and high schools that commit to participate in the initiative. Core team members from over 130 schools serving middle and high school students participated in the initial trainings offered during the Spring 2011 term. Citywide trainings have resumed in the **Fall 2011 term** and will continue throughout the 2011-2012 school year to ensure that all New York City public schools serving middle school level and high school level students have the opportunity to participate.

Schools participating in the New York City Gifting Initiative will be offered three key resources:

1. **One half-day professional development educator workshop** which includes training in the curriculum sequence and methodology, hands-on and classroom-based simulations with materials, and planning assistance.
2. **Classroom materials** in either electronic or hard copy form, including the Overcoming Obstacles *Anti-Bullying Handbook*. Curriculum materials include activity-based lessons, reproducible student worksheets, journal writing opportunities, reading assignments, technology connections, and curriculum assessments.
3. **Ongoing support** for educators (i.e. supplemental materials, coaching, refresher trainings) provided by Overcoming Obstacles staff.

The Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum has been aligned with national and local standards including the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) learning standards. While the Life Skills Curriculum is designed to be implemented as a year-long weekly course, the resources and plans are flexible to meet the diverse schedules, interests and needs of individual schools. Educators are encouraged to adapt materials to meet their individual classroom and school goals.

2011 – 2012 Participating Schools

Schools participating in the New York City Gifting Initiative will be asked to commit to the following:

- **Beginning September 2011-** Each school will identify a core team of **3 school-based staff members** – a combination of guidance counselors, lead teachers, and school administrators is ideal – to participate in ONE half-day training. Registration information is available through each school's CFN Youth Development liaison.
- **Beginning October 2011-** Following the training session, each school will submit a proposed implementation plan briefly outlining how the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum will be utilized at the school during the 2011-2012 school year. An implementation template will be sent electronically to participating schools.
- **2011-2012 School Year-** Schools will be expected to implement the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum as outlined in their respective implementation plans.
- **June 2012-** Upon completion of curriculum implementation, participating schools will be asked to submit brief surveys evaluating their experiences.

We appreciate the continued support of Children's First Networks in strongly encouraging schools serving middle school and high school students to participate in this excellent resource. Seating capacity is limited at each training site and training registration will be confirmed on a first-come, first served basis.

For additional information and to confirm participation and attendance at one of the city-wide 2011-2012 half-day training sessions, schools are asked to contact their CFN Youth Development Liaison or :

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