

STAYING AFLOAT: how to keep adolescents from falling through the cracks in an ever- changing world

A guide by Maya Salameh, Lillian Shallow,
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who are we and why are we here?



we promise we have
some qualifications, and
hopefully everyone can
take away something
important or helpful
from our presentation!

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origin story

how are we “successful”?

→ **intellectual participation**

Controlling and defining change. Ex: Jacob's advisor

→ **holistic engagement**

Defining students as more than just a grade report, ex: GPA versus development

→ **effecting substantive change**

Emotionally and socially tangible modes of recognition.

Meaningful results, lasting impact

anecdotal evidence, aka storytime!



Jacob's Story



storytime continued!





peer case studies

Names have been changed

These are some examples
from outside of our arena
of experience



They sketch and make zines.

They grew up in a turbulent environment, have issues with dissociation, and struggle with mild PTSD.

Spotty with AA.

In a psychiatric behavioral facility, they discovered art therapy.

This fall they are going to community college to study a mental health work certificate and drug and alcohol certificate.

The heart of the zine is a sketch of

meet Michael.

- Parents came to the US in extreme poverty, with no formal education
- Michael born into abusive household, became involved in gangs
- Freshman year GPA: 1.2
- Never felt like he could change his grades because he was poor and often homeless
- He found a program: Realitychangers



meet Katie.

- She grew up in Chicago, in poverty
- Her dad was an abusive alcoholic, and her mom was addicted to painkillers
- In high school, she tried out for the volleyball team
- Ranked number 4 in Illinois for Girl's Volleyball
- Full athletic scholarship to Rutgers University



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“I threw up in my AA sponsor’s car. I was institutionalized 4 times, and I knew I’d be back.”

Jamie, San Diego

“Some nights I didn’t come home. I just layed on the street and looked at the stars.”

Michael, San Diego

“No matter what you think, you are no better than us,’ they said to me.”

Katie, Chicago

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engagement!



types of engagement

→ brain

→ heart

→ body

important components of engagement

must have a skill component

blackjack, rock-paper-scissors

must have individual and group components

solitaire, hide-and-go-seek

improvement and impact must be measurable, as well as continuous

can't just have one, attainable goal like winning a title or beating one person

impediments to engagement

poverty -social boundaries

Teens often feel like people don't take them seriously

They don't have any outlets or structure

Lots of people don't know how or what to change about themselves or their environment

creative engagement

Artistic self expression allows young people to hone their communication skills, to acquire cultural literacy, and to develop their voice as members and future leaders of the community.

According to the US Nat'l Endowment for the Arts, teenagers of low socioeconomic status involved in arts activities have better academic results (higher grades and college enrollment rates), higher career goals (half expected to work in a professional career like law, medicine, or management versus 20% of those with no arts involvement)

creative pt. 2

Allows for mentorship

Most accessible and fluid means of expres

Eludes definition

Tangible and often physical markers of
accomplishment

Provides for both introspection and interaction



intellectual + social engagement

Adolescence is a time of intense change

Kids haven't been able to control or understand that change for the majority of their lives

Two things can happen-either they gain that control and do something productive with it; or they don't



How to make people feel like they can change

Convince people that they can change things around them

Help them find something that they're passionate about—sports, music, etc.

It needs to be something they are intrinsically motivated to do

Something that helps them change themselves, their environment, or both



why civic engagement works

It empowers people- they discover that they can change things they don't like

People find something that they're passionate about

That empowerment often motivates them to continue, creating a positive cycle

It helps change one's self and one's environment at the same time



physical and athletic engagement

physical activity is widely regarded
as positive

CDC, Mayo Clinic, parents.com, pretty
much every reliable publication

motion is a clinically proven
antidepressant



physical and athletic engagement

form close relationships and
social bonds

support system

“team mentality”

bonding over shared interest



physical and athletic engagement

gives motivation due to
quantifiable benchmarks of
achievements

always working towards something

continuously stimulated



intersection of interests (mastering the spectrum)

Art experience in HS are more likely to be civically engaged, with comparatively high levels of volunteering, voting, and engagement with local or school politics.

The arts help students develop memory and ability to focus + improve student attendance

solutions

Listen to your patient.

Don't assume you know what will help.

Give them options.

The illusion of choice is vital.

Passion is indefinable.

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thank you!
questions?