Youth Guidance’s Becoming A Man

Program at a Glance

Format:
- 27 weekly group sessions over the course of the school year
- 15 – 20 students per group
- Clinical assessments
- Individual counseling as needed
- Weekly consultation with teachers
- 7th grade through 10th (ages 12 through 16)
- Built-in incentives

Method:
- Traditional group counseling theory
- Cognitive behavioral strategies
- Resiliency theory (strengths-based approach)
- Men’s Work (based on challenge, confrontation and ownership of emotional integrity)
- Prevention-based social-emotional learning

Values Taught:
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Self-determination
- Positive Anger Expression
- Visionary Goal-setting

Target Populations:
- Students in need of mentoring and male role-modeling
- Students who struggle with behavioral and attitudinal issues
- Students who struggle with academic value
Five Values of BAM

**Integrity** – Integrity is the core principle of the BAM program. Students learn to identify and respect societal values and to conduct themselves in accordance with those values. Students learn that a man’s word should have meaning, and that a man’s integrity is dependent on keeping that word. Students learn that a man is someone who is reliable, honest and in touch with his integrity or lack thereof. He makes amends when he is out of integrity, and does what he says he is going to do.

**Accountability** – The BAM program is in essence a male responsibility training program. Students learn that they should be responsible for the choices that they make. Students learn to take ownership for their feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Students learn that a man does not project, or put blame onto others for the consequences of his own bad choices. A man can feel anger, sadness or fear, but he must own his reactions to his emotions.

**Self-determination** – Self-determination is a learned skill, and practice begins in the BAM group. Students learn the importance of focus and perseverance for reaching one’s goals. Students learn to deal with self-defeating feelings, thoughts and behaviors that can become obstacles or barriers to goal attainment. Students learn that self-doubt, uncertainty, and moments of weakness are natural when attempting to reach a goal.

**Positive Anger Expression** – Positive Anger Expression is the most effective and remembered lesson taught in the BAM program. Students learn that anger is a normal emotion that can be expressed in a constructive manner. This skill allows for the alleviation of angry feelings and becomes a bridge toward goal attainment. Students learn anger management coping skills such as deep breathing exercises to elicit a relaxation response. Students learn effective techniques to express anger that avoids typical negative consequences (i.e. suspensions, arrests, damaged relationships, etc.).

**Visionary Goal Setting** – Students learn the difference between short-term and long-term goals and how to create realistic steps toward goal attainment. Students learn to envision their manhood in the future and to make clear connections between their current behaviors, attitudes and values to their vision. During this intense phase, students aim to get in touch with traumas, pains and faulty thinking that cause them to act in negative, destructive manners. They learn how to heal these parts of themselves and to use the energy toward attaining their vision. Not all students are ready for this phase of the BAM program. However, it can be a life altering phase for those who are.