

Independent Living Instructors and Social Workers: This Page Is for You

Use represent in IL Classes

This issue's IL section starts on page 4. It focuses on figuring out your options after you leave foster care. Future issues will focus on other important skills, like how to manage money, find and keep a job, take care of your health and hygiene, and form a support network.

Following is a plan for how to use this issue's stories in your independent living class. (If you're giving feedback on how the lessons work with your group, please call 212-279-0708 x114.)

Topic: Exploring options for life after care

Goal: To help teens compare the benefits of college, the military, vocational school

Total time of all discussions and activities: 1 hour

Warm-up activity: 10 minutes

Have teens take the quiz "You're Leaving Care...What's Next?" on p. 7. (Tell group they must all aim, in this quiz, for a "good-paying job," but note that there are different ways to get there.

Read stories: 15-20 minutes

When they first reach the instruction "Read story" in the quiz, tell them to stop and read that story on the page number indicated.

They will read either "From 'Group Home Child' to College Success" on p. 20, "Anchors Aweigh!" on p. 12, which is about the military, or "Job Corps: Train to Gain" on p. 8.

Group Activity: 10 minutes

Divide teens into three groups based on the story they read. For instance, everyone who read "From 'Group Home Child' to College Success" should be in a group together.

Ideally, one group will have read the story on p. 20 about college. One will have read the story on p. 12 about the military. The third group will have read about Job Corps, on p. 8. However, you can also do the debate with any two of the groups.

Tell groups to discuss the advantages of the program they read about, and write down the three best reasons why someone should attend the program (college, Job Corps, or the Navy).

Debate: 10-15 minutes

Tell groups that they are *recruitment officers* for the program they read about. For instance, if they read about Job Corps, it is their job to convince kids to go to Job Corps. If they read about the Navy, it is their job to convince teens to join the Navy.

Pick one especially mature teen in the group (or use you) to be the "target" of the "recruiters." Tell groups that that teen (or yourself) is trying to choose what they will do after they leave foster care.

Give each group 2-3 minutes to try to convince the teen (or you) to attend their program. Have a small prize for the group—for instance chocolate kisses. Announce this prize in advance.

After groups have presented their arguments, have the teen (or yourself) ask each group two questions. Have teen (or yourself) choose the program whose team made the best argument.

Note: You (or the teen) have to be unbiased in picking the option that sounds best based on the *quality of the arguments* each team makes—not your personal preference.

Closing Activity: 10 minutes

Explain to the group that they have learned about some serious options available to them after they leave foster care. Have each teen say, briefly, what option she or he is considering, and why.