Grant Writing Tool for the Reconnecting Youth (RY) Program

Curriculum	Eggert, L., & Nicholas, L. J. (2004). *Reconnecting Youth: A peer group approach to building life skills.*
Website	http://www.reconnectingyouth.com
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Program Development	The Reconnecting Youth program (RY) was developed, implemented and evaluated in collaboration with Pacific Northwest high schools over the course of 15 years. Three separate studies of RY (funded by NIDA, NIMH and the US DOE through the University of Washington) illustrated the benefits of the program.
Program Description	Reconnecting Youth (RY) is a school-based indicated prevention program that targets young people in middle and high school who show signs of poor school achievement and potential for school dropout. They may also show signs of other problem behaviors (such as substance abuse, aggression/depression, or suicide ideation). RY teaches skills to build resiliency with respect to risk factors. The program incorporates social support and life skills training with the following components: ♦ *The Reconnecting Youth class*, a semester-long, daily class divided into five major units: Getting Started, Self-Esteem Enhancement, Decision-Making, Personal Control, and Interpersonal Communication; ♦ *Social activities and school bonding* to establish drug-free social activities and friendships, as well as to improve a teen's relationship to school; ♦ *School system crisis response plan* for addressing suicide prevention approaches; and ♦ *Parent involvement,* which may include active parental consent and support of the RY goals for their youth.

Program Goals	1. Increased SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (including school bonding, attendance, GPA, and credits earned) 2. Decreased DRUG INVOLVEMENT (including increased drug use control and decreased adverse drug-use consequences) 3. Decreased EMOTIONAL DISTRESS (including decreased suicidal behaviors and related risk factors: depression, hopelessness, anger-control problems, stress; and increased protective factors: self-esteem, personal control, and social support from peers, family and school)
Prevention Strategies	RY utilizes the following prevention strategies: ♦ adult motivation and support ♦ peer group support ♦ coaching and skills training ♦ monitoring, and ♦ social activities and school bonding. These strategies serve to increase personal competencies and social support resources, leading to the desired outcomes.
RY Class Description	• 10-12 students/group; all at dropout risk • Richly diverse group (grade levels, gender, risk factors, strengths) • Implemented within the school schedule • Offered for credit • 55-minute periods over a semester (also fits with block scheduling over a trimester) • Taught by a specially selected and trained adult (e.g., teacher, counselor, community health educator) who excels at working with high-risk youth • Combines a tested peer group approach with a tested life skills training model to effectively enhance the personal and social protective factors of high-risk youth
Student Identification and Selection	Students are INVITED to participate in RY, never assigned. They are identified as appropriate for the program using the following criteria: ♦ Behind in credits for grade level AND in the top 25th percentile for absences AND has a GPA < 2.3 (or a sharp drop in grades) ♦ Has a prior dropout status. ♦ Referred by school personnel & meet 1 or more of the criteria above Students who meet these criteria are approached individually, informed about the format and goals of the RY class, and invited to join. Parental consent is recommended, but not required.

Teacher/Facilitator Selection	Effective RY Teacher/Facilitators are individuals who:
	♦ Work effectively with students who are at risk for high school dropout, drug involvement, and emotional distress
	♦ Evidence a desire to work with youth who are having problems with grades/attendance and may be drug involved and/or emotionally distressed (depressed and/or thinking about suicide)
	♦ Receive endorsements from other staff & students attesting to the above characteristics
	♦ Evidence a healthy sense of self-esteem
	♦ Express a strong desire to teach RY classes and who are informed and enthusiastic about the program and its goals
	♦ Express willingness and the ability to attend RY Teacher/ Facilitator Training
	♦ Commit to participating in the supervision process with the RY Coordinator
Critical Elements to Successful Implementation	• High fidelity to the curriculum design and school-based structure;
	• 1:10 -12 teacher-to-student ratio;
	• Use of the criteria for student selection;
	• Adherence to the selection criteria for RY teachers/facilitators;
	• Implementation training for RY teachers/facilitators, program coordinators and administrators.
	• A Support Team to prepare the school for implementing RY. Cultivating and involving all constituencies in the process of adopting the RY Program is critical to success.

Outcomes	The youth who participated in the RY Program research evidenced the following: **Increases in School Achievement** ♦ 18% increase in GPA for all classes, excluding RY ♦ 7.5% increase in credits earned per semester ♦ Curbed increasing trend in absences (whereas controls' absences continued to increase) ♦ 35% decrease in dropout rates **Reductions in Drug Involvement** ♦ 50% decrease in hard drug use ♦ 48% decrease in drug-use control problems and adverse drug-use consequences ♦ Curbed progression of alcohol and other drug use (whereas controls' use increased) ♦ 7% decrease in drug involvement **Reductions in Suicidal Behaviors and Emotional Distress** ♦ 80% decrease in suicidal behaviors ♦ 75% decrease in depression & hopelessness ♦ 38% decrease in perceived stress ♦ 48% decrease in anger-control problems **Increases in Personal and Social Support Assets** ♦ 23% increase in personal control ♦ 25% increase in self-esteem ♦ 13% increase in school bonding ♦ 26% increase in social support
Evaluation Materials and Costs	Costs will vary according to your needs and objectives. Please contact us for a free evaluation plan consultation before completing your grant application.
Implementation Costs	Costs will vary according to your needs and objectives. Please contact us for a free budgeting consultation before completing your grant application: info@reconnectingyouth.com.

| Listings, Rewards and Honors | SAMHSA's <u>National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)</u> <u>National Dropout Prevention Center/Network</u> (Model Program) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - <u>OJJDP Model Programs Guide</u> Healthy Communities Institute - <u>Promising Practices Library</u> <u>The Decision Support System for Youth Well Being</u> Child Trends - <u>What Works/LINKS</u> NIDA - Preventing Drug Abuse among Children and Adolescents: <u>Examples of Research-Based Drug Abuse Prevention Programs</u> Canada National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC): <u>Promising and Model Crime Prevention Programs</u> Indian Health Services, Community Suicide Prevention Website: <u>Promising and Effective Programs</u> Selected by the U.S. Department of Education (in 2002 and 2005) as one of the SAMHSA model programs that DOE would fund through their grant application process. Honored in May 2000 as a model program for the 1999 Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Awards presented at the U.S. Congress. Co-sponsored by Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, the National Prevention Network, and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Washington, DC. Selection in Drug Strategies' (1999) publication, *Making the Grade: A Guide to School Drug Prevention Programs*, as the only research-based high school drug prevention program in the US to receive an "A" grade. Recommendation by the U. S. Department of Education through the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program as successful in preventing drug use and violent behavior among youth (1998). |

Research References	1. Eggert, LL (1998). Reconnecting Youth: An indicated prevention program. In National conference on drug abuse prevention research: Presentations, papers, and recommendations. NIH Publication No. 98-4293, pp. 57-72. Rockville, MD: NIDA, National Institutes of Health, US DHHS. Available from NCADI (Tel. 1-800-729-6686) or NIDA's web site at http://www.nih.nida.gov.
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	3. Eggert, LL, Nicholas, LJ & Owen, LM (1995). Reconnecting youth: A peer group approach to building life skills. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.
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