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RESA VIII trains Life Skills teachers

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RESA VIII trained staff in the WVDE Life Skills program at Capon Bridge Middle School Oct. 20. Teachers attended from Pendleton, Grant, Hardy, Hampshire, Mineral, Berkeley and Jefferson counties. The program serves students in grades six through eight throughout West Virginia.

Kim George of Petersburg Elementary School, Keleen Poling of Maysville Elementary School and Matt Vance of Petersburg High School attended the training from Grant County.

Chris Roberson from Pendleton County Middle School attended the training from Pendleton County.

Teacher feedback was very positive. Some of the comments included: "Using magazine advertisements is a creative way to make students aware of marketing techniques used by companies"; "The life skills curriculum provides a lot of skills needed by adolescents to enhance their ability to make wise decisions"; and "Actually letting the students interact in behavioral rehearsals is a good hands-on way to practice."

The Life Skills training program is different than other prevention programs in several ways, according to a program spokesperson. First, it is based on science. It was carefully designed to target the primary causes of substance use after an extensive review of the existing research literature about the causes. Second, it is comprehensive in that it addresses all the factors leading adolescents to use one or more drugs by teaching a combination of health information, general life skills and drug resistance skills. Third, it uses a variety of teaching methods with emphasis on behavior rehearsal. Fourth, its effectiveness is documented by more than 20 years of rigorous evaluation research.

Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin is the author of the program. He is an internationally known expert on drug abuse prevention. His groundbreaking work in the area of drug abuse prevention has received national and international attention.

Life Skills covers lessons in self-image and self-improvement; making decisions; smoking; alcohol; marijuana and advertising; violence; coping with anxiety; coping with anger; communication skills; and social skills, resolving conflicts and assertiveness.

"This program is implemented in the grades where students are most influenced with peer pressure," said RESA VIII Executive Director Jane Lynch. "It is the perfect age to teach them refusal and decision making skills. The Life Skills program is the only curriculum currently being implemented across the entire state in the field of prevention."

Article Photos



FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW — Teachers from Grant and Pendleton County attended the Oct. 20 WVDE Life Skills training program at Capon Bridge Middle School. Above are from left, trainer Kim Lopez, Grant County Schools representatives Kim George, Matt Vance and Keleen Poling and trainer Suzanne Chapman. At right is Lopez, Grant County School's Chris Roberson, and Chapman.

Erin Hook, RESA VIII staff development secretary, facilitated the registration.

For more information on the Life Skills training program, contact Donna Kuhn, RESA VIII tobacco prevention specialist.

For more information about RESA VII, visit resa8.org.

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