

# Life-Saving Community Skills Meeting the Critical Needs of Youth

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Open Door Development

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- BA Recreation with Sociology/Social Work
- Working in the challenge course industry since 2001
- Work with youth, corporate, employment, and justice groups
- Team building, conflict resolution training, facilitation training, leadership development

# Key Cultural Trends Impacting Youth

- Isolating Technologies
  - Results
    - Lowered emotional intelligence
    - Decreased conflict resolution skills
- Peer Orientation
  - Results
    - Increased physically and emotionally damaging experiences
    - Decreased support networks
    - Increased anxiety associated with independence

# What is IQ

- Are you able to use reason?
- Are you able to use logic?
- Can you complete a mathematical equation?
- Do you comprehend the English language?
- Can you recognize patterns?
- Can you group items together?

# What is EQ

- Can you identify another person's emotions?
- Do you understand the cues in a person's facial expression? body language? tone of voice?
- Do you know how to present yourself in order to accurately communicate a message to someone else?
- Do you comprehend the potential consequences of your words, actions, environment. etc?

# North America = Emotionally Retarded

- Increased isolation and communication through technology is resulting in lower EQ.
- Because we spend less time speaking face to face, making eye contact, hearing tone of voice, seeing body language, etc we have fewer learning opportunities.

# North America = Emotionally Retarded

- Learning opportunities include positive outcomes where our words, actions, environment, etc have lead to successful communication or constructive circumstances.
- Learning opportunities include negative outcomes where our words, actions, environment, etc have lead to unsuccessful communication or destructive circumstances.

# North America = Emotionally Retarded

- Because technology insulates us from people's responses to our words, actions, environment, etc we have a false sense of the acceptability and consequences of our choices.

# North America = Emotionally Retarded

- Insulating Technology
- Your computer, laptop, cell phone, game system, etc.
- Nasty emails, wall posts, messages, tweets, comments, bulletins, photos, videos, live chats, etc.
- Because you can't see the person's facial expression, hear their tone of voice, or even get an immediate response there is a false perception of the person's reaction.

# North America = Emotionally Retarded

- Because many websites or other technologies allow you complete anonymity, many people will say or do things with a false sense of security thinking there will be no consequences to their actions.

# Increased Damaging Experiences

- The teenager, tween and twixter did not exist 200 years ago!
- Over the years we have created more age and stages and creating program to match their needs.
- This has created segregation between age groups reducing interaction

# Learning From Mistakes

- You don't need to make them all yourself!
- When the generations interact they are able to encourage, teach, support and guide each other.
- When we reduce opportunities for relationships with our elders we lose 'built-in' mentoring opportunities in our communities.
- If the only resources you have available to you are people your age who are just as confused as you are a lot of your learning is trial and error! A painful way to learn!!!
- We also lose opportunities to pass on our lessons learned to those coming behind us. We grow from teaching others.

# Decreased Support Networks

- One of the benefits of going through difficult experiences is that it empowers us to help others when they face the same trials.
- When we are isolated in to peer groups we lose access to a wealth of counsel and support during difficult times because we don't have access to the people with the experiences!

# Increased Anxiety Associated With Independence

- Twixters: 20 and 30 somethings who still live with their parents
- Why are they still at home?
  - They don't know how to function as independent adults
- Their concept of survival is limited. They don't have examples of individuals living Life (long-term or big picture).

# The Power of Community

- Allow and/or create opportunities for the generations to interact
- Allow youth to face struggles. Allow them to experience frustration and failure.
- Intentionally build relationships
- Intentionally create boundaries
- Intentionally provide consequences

The Three Legged Stool

Relationships

Boundaries

Consequences