

2006-2008 Multi-Year Plan of Work

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Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis in Pierce County

Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:

The western Wisconsin counties of Pierce and St. Croix have seen growth in population as well as rental and home ownership costs. Growth in the job sector for west central Wisconsin has been in lower wage jobs that do not meet livable wage standards. In addition, the overall cost of living in these counties has created a need for more than one wage earner per family. The 2004 self-sufficiency wage for a single parent raising one preschooler and one school-age child in Pierce County is \$19.01 per hour (\$21.18/hour in St. Croix) compared to \$13.25 in Dunn County. Self-sufficiency wage is the hourly wage needed in order to have sufficient after-tax income to meet basic needs without public or private assistance (Wisconsin's Women Network).

The fair market rent for Pierce and St. Croix counties is \$912 per month for a two-bedroom apartment, the highest in the state. The median sale price of a single-family home rose 54% in Pierce County between 1995 and 2002 (\$164,000 in 2003), far exceeding the state's overall increase in housing costs. During that same time period, the Consumer Price Index climbed at less than half that rate increasing only 17.8 percent.

According to the Department of Workforce Development, the jobs in greatest demand in western Wisconsin make \$10.11 or less per hour. This disconnect between livable wage jobs and escalating housing costs will continue to increase the burden on low and moderate income households.

The Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network (PSCHRN) was convened in 2001 to address the local issue of homelessness and, more broadly, affordable housing. Members of this group engaged the wider community in a successful effort to renovate a former convent into a multi-bed transitional housing facility for homeless individuals and families. The shelter has been filled to capacity since it opened in 2002. They renovated the adjoining chapel in 2005 to accommodate families on a waiting list.

The Pierce - St. Croix Housing Resource Network has documented the growing need for safe and affordable housing in the area. Communities, government and nonprofit entities need to respond to the housing crisis using a variety of tools, but first they must be educated about the possible options. One innovative solution that has been successful elsewhere is the community land trust; a nonprofit organization created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community while providing access to permanently affordable housing. One goal of the PSCHRN is to bring the community land trust model to western Wisconsin with the intent to demonstrate to developers, potential funding partners and the broader community that a community land trust is a useful tool to help address the affordable housing issue. A long-term strategy is to have a community land trust in place so that the housing stays affordable in perpetuity by removing escalating land values from the equation.

Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:

Priority Program #1: Safe and Affordable Housing for Residents of Pierce County

Long Term Outcomes:

1. Communities will increase their capacity to develop and preserve decent, safe and affordable housing.
2. Low to moderate income families will have greater access to safe, affordable housing options.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Community partners will adopt and implement new practices that increase access to housing resources and housing stability.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Community partners will build connections through multi-stakeholder coalitions, planning and other efforts.
2. Community members will become more aware of the local housing situation.

Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:

Inputs:

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. UW-Extension Housing Specialist, Marc Smith
3. Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network
4. Two Rivers Community Land Trust (Theresa Vanderbent)
5. Grant funding
6. Educational materials/curriculum related to affordable housing

| Outputs: Participation (who we reach) | Outputs: Activities (what we do) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Service agencies and providers ✓ Local developers and home builders ✓ Faith-based community representatives ✓ Local and county government officials ✓ Landlords and realtors ✓ Bankers and lenders ✓ Local volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to recruit new housing coalition members from key organizations in the community (2006-2008) ✓ Facilitate community presentations to increase awareness of local housing issues and resources: Shanty Town event planned for (April 2006) ✓ Educate key stakeholders about the value of community land trusts as an option for affordable housing (2006-2008) ✓ Continue to seek funding to support a community land trust (CLT) model for affordable housing in Pierce and St. Croix counties (2006-2008) |

Evaluation:

1. Number of people who increase their awareness of the affordable housing and homelessness issue as a result of participating in community awareness events.
2. Number of partners or key stakeholders who increase their awareness of affordable housing issues and resources.
3. Number of new partners or key stakeholders who commit to working on issues related to affordable housing.
4. Describe how partners have collected, shared and/or used local housing data using a survey format or personal contact (phone).
5. Describe ways in which the coalition's work has effected infrastructure changes related to local housing.

Professional Development:

1. Attend housing-related presentations at the National Extension Association for Family Consumer Sciences annual conference in Denver (October 2006) and St. Paul (September 2007).
2. Attend district in-service: "Revitalizing Rent Smart: Helping Wisconsin Citizens Secure Stable Housing" (fall 2006/spring 2007).
3. Attend Shanty Town educational event (April 2006).
4. Attend A Home for Everyone Conference (July 2008).

Parenting Education and Support

Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:

Pierce County is considered urban because of its geographic proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area even though a majority of the communities are rural. It has a population of 36,804 (2000 Census) with 98% of the population being white. Approximately 8,850 children under 18 years of age live in family households.

Families raising children are faced with more complex and challenging responsibilities due to the familial, social, economic and technological changes of our modern society. There is an increasing struggle to balance family and work.

The federal government will once again be facing severe budget limitations and the state will be making difficult decisions affecting the education and social service budgets serving families. The stalling economy and rising unemployment means hard times for families and communities, especially low-wage families with children.

The decline in state revenues is causing a budget crisis forcing cutbacks in funding for education, social services, and other programs serving working families. According to Jan Richter, outreach specialist at Connect For Kids, "Low and moderate-income parents struggling to maintain shelter, food, and health coverage during lay-offs are finding that decades-old safety nets have been weakened. The majority of low-wage workers are no longer eligible for unemployment compensation. Many welfare-to-work families who need government benefits to

supplement poverty earnings may be running up against their lifetime time limits for eligibility”. Families struggling with multiple stressors are often dealing with parenting issues as well.

The need for effective, high quality parent education programs remains a high priority in Wisconsin and Pierce County. There is a growing need among parents, professionals, community leaders and citizens for educational opportunities and technical assistance that can expand their knowledge and skills about child rearing, especially in the area of evidence-based programs.

Evidence-based (or “science-based”) programs are approaches that have been developed and evaluated using scientific processes. These programs are grounded in a clear theoretical foundation and have been carefully implemented and evaluated. The evaluation findings have been subjected to critical review by other researchers and the program has been replicated in a variety of settings. Programs and approaches that are evidence-based have produced desired results in a number of different settings.

One relatively new stressor to families and communities is the increasing use and production of methamphetamine in Pierce and St. Croix counties. Local law enforcement, schools, human service agencies and other organizations are struggling to provide more comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies. The judicial and medical costs associated with this drug are astronomical and a larger portion of the county budget is being targeted towards enforcement and treatment.

The River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY) has been addressing issues of alcohol and other drug abuse in the River Falls school district for over ten years. Two of their major goals include: 1) reducing substance abuse among youth, and 2) increasing positive family communication and strengthening parental boundaries.

In my work with the RFPFY, I have collaborated with UW-River Falls (UW-RF) staff on projects related to the effects of adolescent alcohol and drug abuse on the mental health and ultimately the academic success of college students. UWRF counseling staff report that more and more students are seeking assistance for feelings of being “overwhelmed” as early as the third week of school rather than at semester time as in years past. Some of these students turn to inappropriate and ineffective stress management behaviors such as alcohol or other drug use among others.

I am currently working with colleagues from UW-Extension (Dianne Weber, Washburn County Family Living Educator), UW-River Falls, UW-Superior and UW-Barron to help research and respond to the mental health crisis on campuses. The plan is to develop a curriculum that focuses on specific solutions and best practices in preventing mental health problems during mid to late adolescence. Since the goal is to address the issue from a prevention standpoint, the primary target audience will be high school students who intend to pursue some form of post-secondary education and their parents/caretakers.

Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:

Priority Program #1: Increasing utilization of **evidence-based** parenting and family programs

Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in **evidence-based** parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

Medium Term Outcomes:

1. Community partners and volunteers will increase their use of **evidence-based** programs.
2. Families who participate in **evidence-based** programs will improve their parenting practices

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community programs and resources thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Community partners and volunteers will increase their understanding of, awareness of, and access to **evidence-based** programs.

Priority Program #2: Research-based and Best Practices Parenting and Family Programming

Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in research-based and best practices parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Families and other caretakers of children who participate in research-based content and best practices parenting or family education programs will improve their parenting practices.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community programs and resources thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Parents and other adults who care for children will increase their knowledge and use of positive communication and parenting practices.
3. The River Falls Partnership for Youth and other collaborations focused on children and families will function effectively to create and strengthen community capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:

Inputs:

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. UW-Extension State Specialists
3. River Falls Partnership for Youth
4. Research-based parenting education curriculum and materials
5. Evidence-based parenting education curriculum and materials
6. Funding for training and purchasing materials

7. Local community leaders
8. Strengthening Families Program (SFP) Training
9. Program evaluation tools
10. UW-River Falls (UW-RF) student volunteers
11. UW-RF teaching and guidance staff
12. UW-RF survey research center staff
13. UW-Superior staff: Brent Notbohm and Tom Notton (filmmakers)

| Outputs: Participation (who we reach) | Outputs: Activities (what we do) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parents, grandparents and other caretakers ✓ Childcare providers ✓ Teachers, other school staff and administrators ✓ NEAFCS members ✓ NAE4-HA Conference attendees ✓ Home visitors ✓ Separated and divorced parents ✓ Young families ✓ UW-RF staff and students ✓ UW-Barron staff and students ✓ River Falls Partnership for Youth members ✓ Students preparing for college ✓ Parents of students preparing for college | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide technical support and parenting education and support programs for the River Falls Partnership for Youth (2006-08). 2. Teach RFPFY members how to use the logic model for developing programs (2006). 3. Network and develop working relationships with local agencies, organizations, schools and families to help support healthy families and communities in Pierce County (2006-08). 4. Organize and teach parenting portion of “Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 10-14” in the River Falls School District (Fall 2006, 2007, 2008). 5. Teach “Bully Prevention” to Pierce County families (Spring 2006); Northwest Parenting and Family Education Conference at Washington State University Vancouver (March 2006); Ellsworth School District Teacher Inservice (January 2007). 6. Teach “Raising Your Spirited Child” for Pierce County families (Spring 2006); UW-Stout Early Childhood Education Conference (Spring 2007). 7. Teach “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility” to Pierce County families (Spring 2006); UW-Stout Early Childhood Education Conference (April 2006); NEAFCS conference in Denver (October, 2006); NAE4-HA conference in Milwaukee (October, 2006). 8. Coordinate funding and distribution of the monthly, age-paced “Parenting the First Year” Newsletter to parents of children born at the River Falls Hospital (2006-08). 9. Co-author and coordinate distribution of monthly Young Families Newsletter to Pierce County families (2006-08). 10. Coordinate distribution of “Parenting Together While Apart” newsletter for non-traditional families in Pierce County (2006-08). 11. Participate as member of the Pierce-St. Croix Tobacco Coalition by providing educational resources as it relates to health education in the community (2006-08). |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Participate as member of the Area Health and Mental Health Services Network by providing educational resources as it relates to health and mental health education in the community (2006-08). 13. Review and update local family living web page (2006-08). 14. Monthly radio show on family living related topics (ie. Parental involvement in schools, internet safety and children, sibling rivalry, etc). 15. Provide health-related information at the Pierce County employee health fair (April 2006). 16. Participate as member of the Success by Six Leadership Board (2006-08). 17. Assist in expanding Family Resource Center educational programs into Pierce County (2006-07). 18. Participate as member of the Coordinated Services Team/Wraparound pilot in Ellsworth and Prescott School districts (2006-08). 19. Participate as member of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to Methamphetamines (2006-07). 20. Assist in planning, implementing and evaluating community meth forums in Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties (April/May 2006). 21. Participate as member of the Western District Urban Initiative on Methamphetamine team (2006-07). 22. Assist in developing web site for meth information (2006). 23. Complete research for College Transition project (2006). 24. Develop College Transition curriculum (2006-07). 25. Pilot College Transition curriculum (2007). 26. Develop College Transition Video Companion Piece (2007). 27. Finalize College Transition curriculum (2007). 28. Market packaged College Transition curriculum (2008). 29. Teach College Transition at district inservices (2008). 30. Teach College Transition at NEAFCS and NAE4-HA (2007-08). |
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Evaluation:

1. Retrospective evaluation of the Raising Your Spirited Child class (2006-07).
2. Retrospective evaluation of Bully Prevention classes (2006-08).
3. Long-term evaluation of Bully Prevention and Overindulgence projects (2007).
4. Review and make recommendations for organizations in the RFCPFY using the logic model to apply for Drug-Free Community grant funding (2006-08).

5. After session evaluation for “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility” to Early Childhood and NW Parenting and Family Education conference attendees (2006).
6. Pre and post test survey for the College Transition pilot (2007) and classes (2008); One-on-one interview with parents and children (2007-08); follow-up mail or phone survey will be conducted to document actual behavior change.
7. River Falls Partnership for Youth group member survey to assess effectiveness of coalition activities and leadership (2006-08).

Professional Development:

1. Attend and teach at Northwest Parenting and Family Education Conference at Washington State University-Vancouver (2006).
2. Attend and teach at Early Childhood Education Conference at UW-Stout (2006-08).
3. Attend parent education related presentations at the National Extension Association for Family Consumer Sciences annual conference in Denver (2006) and St. Paul (2007).
4. Attend and teach at the NAE4-HA Annual Conference (2006).
5. Attend College of the Overwhelmed presentation by Dr. Richard Kadison (2006).
6. Attend Cost Benefit Analysis of Prevention Programs by Steve Small (2006).
7. Attend parent education sessions at Annual Family Living Conference (2007).

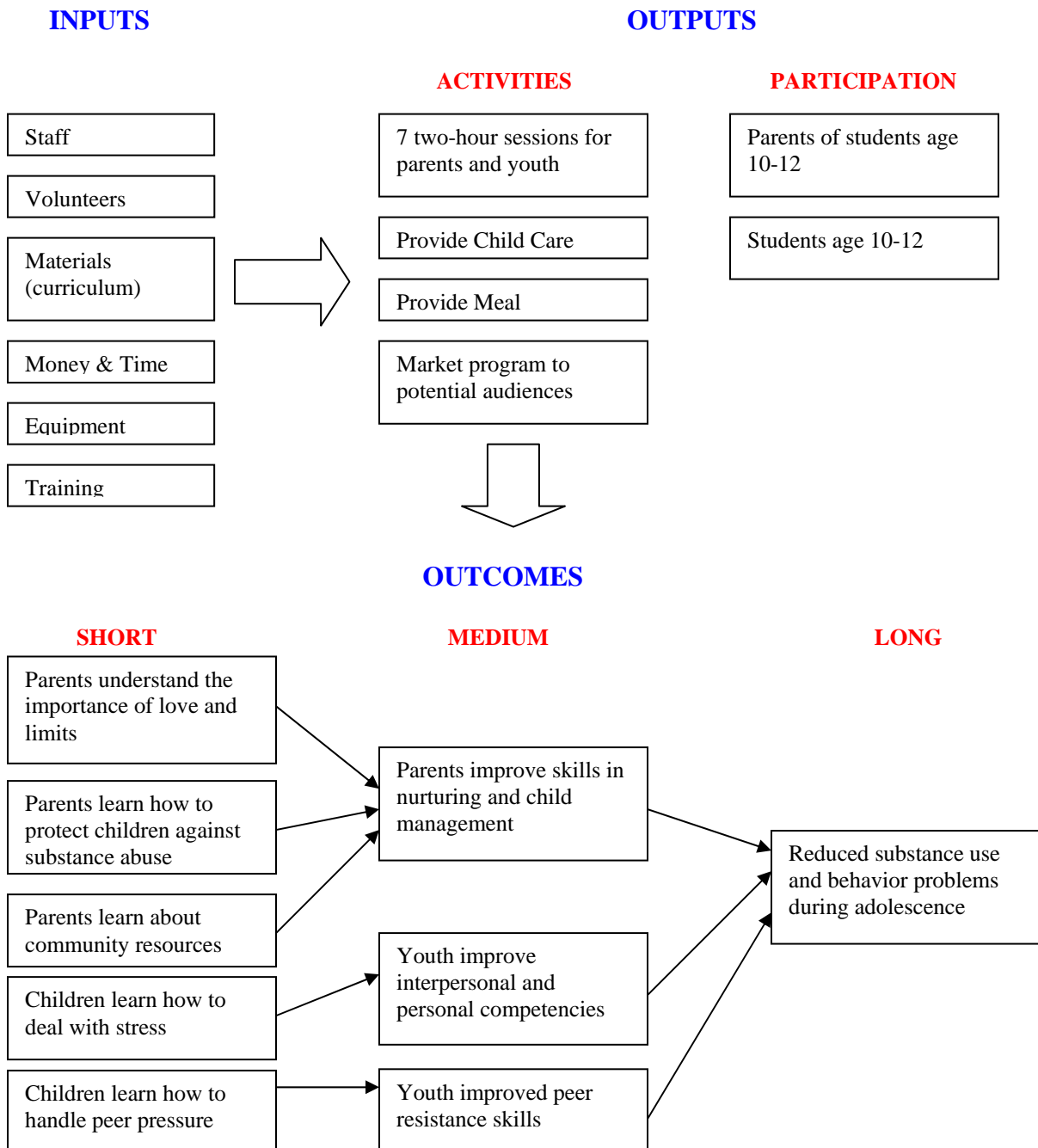
STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM: FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH 10-14

SITUATION:

Statistics from local law enforcement and local SEARCH data from the River Falls Middle and Senior High School document alarming rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among students, as well as an increase in behavior problems during adolescence.

PRIORITIES:

Parents have an enormous influence over a child's choice to participate in negative risky behavior. Children in families with positive communication and nurturing skills have better personal and interpersonal competencies as well as better peer resistant skills.



ASSUMPTIONS:

1. Parents and youth will be motivated to learn/change.
2. Resources are adequate and available.
3. Targeted parents and youth are willing and able to attend.
4. Knowledge change leads to behavior change.

EXTERNAL FACTORS:

1. Time commitment from families might be a barrier
2. Space is limited to 6-12 families

EVALUATION:

What do you want to know?

1. What amount of money and time were invested?
2. Were all sessions delivered? How effectively?
3. Did all parents and youth attend? Did they attend all sessions?
4. To what extent did knowledge and skills increase?
5. To what extent did behaviors change?
6. To what extent was drug abuse delayed or prevented?
7. To what extent were behavior problems prevented?

How will you know it?

1. Retrospective survey of parents and children.
2. One-on-one interview with parents and children.
3. Comments from teachers, guidance counselors and other school personnel.

The College Transition: Managing Stress and Maintaining Health

SITUATION:

About 2.2 million adolescents ages 12 to 17 (9 percent) experienced at least one major depressive episode in the past year. These adolescents were more than twice as likely to have used illicit drugs in the past month as their peers who had not experienced a major depressive episode (21.2 percent compared with 9.6 percent). These findings were released in December, 2005 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) from analysis of the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The report also found that older teens are more likely than younger teens to suffer a major depressive episode in the past year.

According to Dr. Richard Kadison, Chief of Mental Health Services at Harvard University Health Services, a student in college today has the chance of almost one in two that he/she will become depressed to the point of being unable to function; one in two that he/she will binge drink on a regular basis; and one in ten that he/she will seriously consider suicide. College counseling centers across the country report increased frequency and severity of students' mental health concerns. Today's students deal with cross-cultural issues, family dysfunction, low frustration tolerance, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, and weak interpersonal attachments (Kitzrow, 2003). In addition to the academic pressures, extracurricular demands, parental expectations, and racial and cultural differences, students face enormous financial pressure to pay the college bills (Kadison and DeGeronimo, 2004).

The River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY) has been addressing issues of alcohol and other drug abuse in the River Falls school district for over ten years. Two of their major goals include: 1) reducing substance abuse among youth, and 2) increasing positive family communication and strengthening parental boundaries. As a member of the partnership and its leadership team, I have been committed to providing technical and programming support for research and evidence-based youth and parent education initiatives aimed at strengthening families.

In my work with the RFPFY, I have collaborated with University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UW-RF) staff on projects related to the effects of adolescent alcohol and drug abuse on the mental health and ultimately the academic success of college students. UWRF counseling staff report that more and more students are seeking assistance for feelings of being "overwhelmed" as early as the third week of school rather than at semester time as in years past. Some of these students turn to inappropriate and ineffective stress management behaviors such as alcohol or other drug use among others.

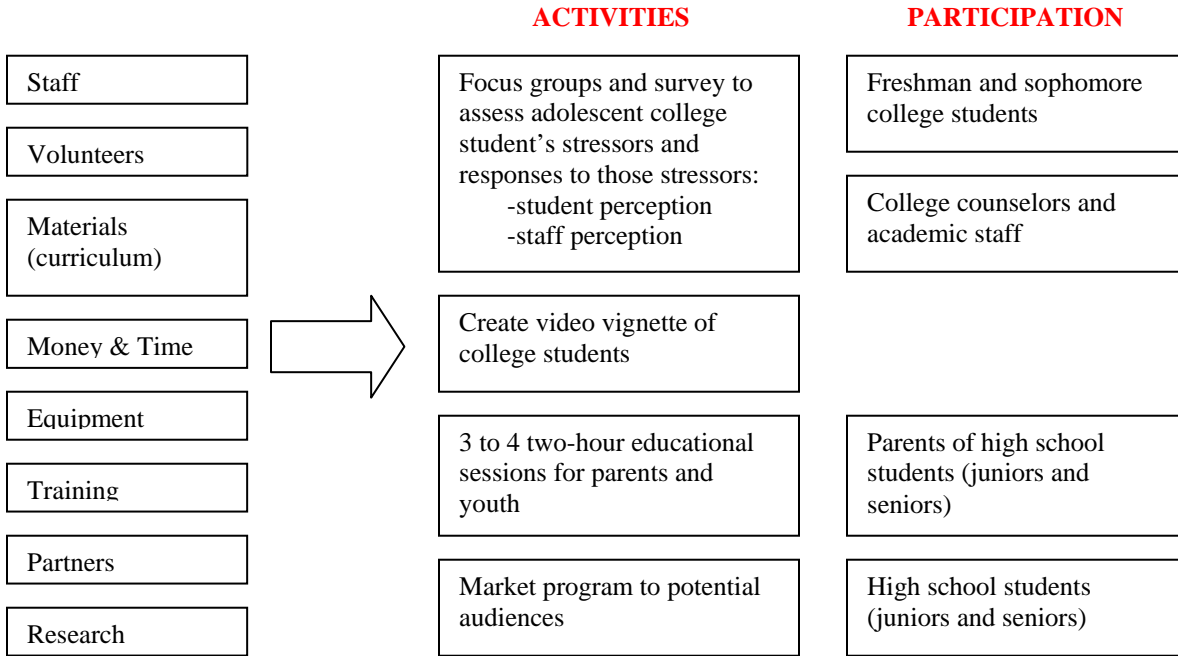
PRIORITIES:

Initial research will begin with a needs assessment implemented at two college campuses in Western Wisconsin (UW-River Falls and UW-Barron) to help answer the questions, "What causes you the most stress?", "What would have been helpful prior to beginning college in preventing your current stress?", "What will help you to maintain good mental health?" and, "What do you do now to help relieve stress?" Possible assessment tools might include a survey instrument or focus groups or a combination of both. Campus staff and administration will also be included in the study.

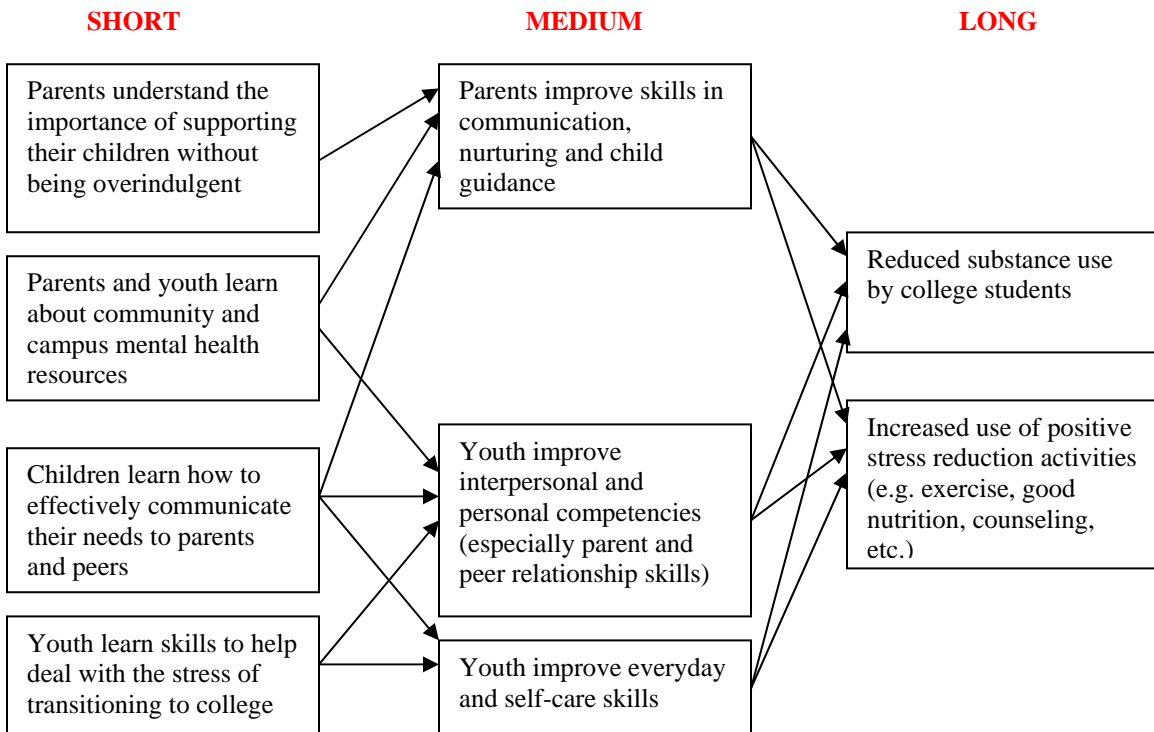
In reviewing current research, we anticipate that some of the content of the curriculum will focus on academic pressures, financial responsibility, relationship skills, alcohol and other drug use, anxiety and depression and other mental health issues. We will be working with local school district staff to implement and evaluate the newly developed curriculum.

INPUTS:

OUTPUTS:



OUTCOMES:



ASSUMPTIONS:

1. Parents and youth will be motivated to learn/change.
2. Resources are adequate and available.
3. Targeted parents and youth are willing and able to attend.
4. Knowledge change leads to behavior change.

EXTERNAL FACTORS:

1. Time commitment from families might be a barrier.
2. Focus is on transition into college. What about students who choose not to go to college?

EVALUATION:

What do you want to know?

1. What amount of money and time were invested?
2. Were all sessions delivered? How effectively?
3. Did all parents and students attend? Did they attend all sessions?
4. To what extent did knowledge and skills increase?
5. To what extent did behaviors change?
6. To what extent was drug use delayed or prevented?
7. To what extent were behavior problems prevented?

How will you know it?

1. Pre and post workshop survey of parents and students to assess knowledge and attitude change.
2. One-on-one interview with parents and children.
3. A follow-up mail or phone survey will be conducted to document actual behavior change.