



The Dibble Institute®

Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills
to Teens and Young Adults

Mind Matters with Byrne Funding

Organization:

[Columbus Wellness Center Outreach & Prevention Project, Inc.](#)

Program Name:

"Swagga and Lace" - Mind Matters Program

Funding:

[Edward J. Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program Funding](#)

What problem is being solved?

Aims to prevent and reduce violence, substance use, address trauma, provide life skills to provide opportunities, and improve the physical, social, and economic conditions that often drive violence.

Curricula Used:

[**Mind Matters: Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience**](#)

Curricula Benefits:

- Gives the participants opportunities to think.
- Gives them tools to reach their dreams and goals.
- Builds empathy and kindness.
- Builds empathy towards victims of gun violence.
- Very simply written – easy for students to understand.
- Builds confidence to select a trusted adult.

Target Audience:

System involved youth, group homes and youth from Georgia communities.

Audience Demographics:

- Mostly 15 to 17
- Mostly males (90-95%) females (10-5%)
- 90% African American; 5% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic
- Literacy level is low.

Class Size:

- Minimum is 5 participants
- Largest is 15 participants
- Average group size is 8

Program Setting:	• Group homes • Regional Juvenile Detention Centers or Youth Development Campus • Summer Programs
Location of Instruction:	• Group Homes – residential living room • Centers – classroom, conference room • Summer Programs- Classroom
Length of Instruction (# of Sessions and hours per session):	• Youth detention: 90 min. 2x per week • Group home: 90 min. 2x per week • Summer program: 90 min. 2x per week Because of the transience of youth, 6 lessons are presented. Sessions begin with Lessons 1, 2, and 6 then uses other Mind Matter lessons/content as needed. Instructors combine activities based on participant(s) needs or request (i.e. Blends two lessons in 90-minute session or will spend longer on lessons if needed or expressed by youth.)
Instructors:	Columbus Wellness Center staff: • 1 facilitator with small group, • 2 facilitators with groups of 6 or more especially if there's a history of behavioral concerns with participants in the group.
Participants Journals:	• Group homes – use journals • Detention – use journals with staples removed or perfect bound journals, that stored at the end of each lesson
Participant Engagement:	Participants are very engaged, willing to share and often request life skills. Life skills is a program activity that offers employment application review along with practice with interviewing skills.
Challenges:	• Group home residents and the system involved youth who can't participate in the classes if they get into a fight in advance of the class session. • In correctional facilities, a participant's sentence length is not shared with the facilitators, so participants can leave unexpectedly.

Challenges (cont'd):	• Lots of gang influence in the shelter, which influences how the students interact. • Focus on creating a family atmosphere when with them with a trusted adult approach. • Group home participants exhibit mental health issues and have weekly therapy, which can conflict with <i>Mind Matters time</i>. Response: one-on-one time with the participant.
Tips:	• Certificates! Offer certificates for lesson completion to each student. • Ask students to help with the class. • Play Bingo! Generate Bingo sheet to review <i>Mind Matters</i> content. Reward winners with prizes. ○ Prizes can be low-cost items for us (wristbands and Honeybuns are participant favorites). • Facilitator arrives to site location early to maximize the time. Participants are included in classroom activities, setup and clean up tasks. • Facilitation of program helps when facilitators demonstrate an interest in student's choice of music, fashion, etc. Students' interests often can be used to emphasize <i>Mind Matters</i> components and goals. (i.e.: They are willing to share their selected artist and inspirations for Lesson 7.) • Take the staples out of the journal in correctional facilities. * Store journal pages in an envelope for each participant. The facility coordinator keeps them between classes. • Ask each location to place <i>Swagga and Lace</i> on the monthly calendar twice a week to ensure that all the lessons are covered. <i>*Dibble offers perfect bound to assist with this need in corrections settings.</i>