

Lesson 1

Are You Really Ready for Independent Living?

Goal: To assist students to accurately evaluate their readiness for independent living; and to aid oppositional youth to reconsider unrealistic appraisals of their readiness.

Materials: Marker board, markers, pens, one copy for each student of "Are You Ready for Independent Living?"

1. ▲ **Inform** the class members that they will be examining if they are ready to live independently, or if they could benefit from training to prepare for independent living. **Distribute** copies of the "Are You Ready for Independent Living?" and **ask** the students to complete the form. **Discuss** the completed forms with the class and **assist** each student to determine if they are really ready to live on their own.

2. ▲ **Direct** the students to determine which areas they most need training on. **Assist** each student to discuss their weak and strong areas with the class.

3. ▲ **Ask** the students to each describe their hopes and dreams about living independently, for example, what their apartment will be like, what kind of job they want, etc. At the end of each student's turn, **ask** the student if they care enough about reaching these goals, to do the work and studying necessary to succeed.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **To successfully live independently, you must master an extensive array of skills.**

- **If you are serious about really wanting to successfully live independently, then you must work and study to be prepared for the situations that you will encounter.**

ARE YOU REALLY READY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING?

EMOTIONAL READINESS

- Are you emotionally stable, and appropriately managing personal problems?
- Do you have, and use, a good plan for interacting with your family?
- Do you have, and use, a good plan for having safe and healthy friendships and relationships?
- Do you consistently use groups, counselors and appropriate adults to assist with problem-solving?
- Do you have, and use, a good community support network?

SOCIAL READINESS

- Are you following a reasonable curfew and meeting other appointments and deadlines?
- Are you following all laws and rules?
- Are you interacting with all adults and peers in a business-like manner?
- Is your personal living area properly maintained?
- Is your personal appearance satisfactory?
- Are you meeting your responsibilities and commitments?
- Do you have ID that you regularly carry with you?
- Do you know how to access community crisis resources?
- Do you have a good plan for transportation?

HEALTH

- Are you properly caring for your hygiene and health needs?
- Are you eating regularly and adequately?
- Are you ensuring that you will not expose yourself to AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases or unplanned pregnancy?
- Are you sleeping adequately?
- Are you aware of and/or using low/no-cost health care options, or have another satisfactory plan?
- Are you consistently avoiding the abuse of substances?

EMPLOYMENT

- Are you getting to work on time every day you are scheduled?
- Does your boss feel that your work performance is satisfactory?
- Do you have a work permit, social security number and other permits, as required?

BUDGET

- Are you earning enough money to meet your bills?
- Do you have a bank account?
- Do you have money saved for emergencies?
- Are you saving money every month?
- Have you developed and followed your budget?
- Do you properly manage your money?

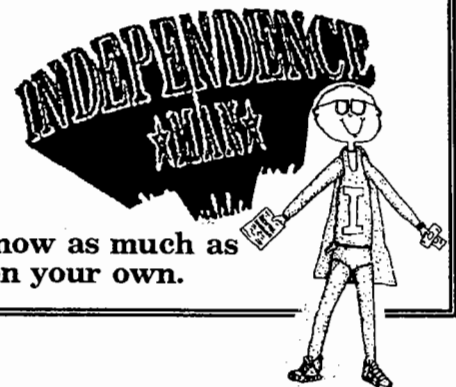
HOUSING

- Have you found an affordable apartment?
- Have you inspected your apartment and consulted with an adult to ensure all arrangements are satisfactory?
- Is the apartment convenient to work and transportation?

SCHOOL

- Are you attending school regularly and on time?
- Are you completing your school requirements satisfactorily?
- Does your behavior meet school requirements?

When you answer "YES" to all these queries, you know as much as
INDEPENDENCE MAN and are ready for life on your own.



Lesson 2

Are You Ready to Handle Life On Your Own?

Goal: To assist students to accurately evaluate their readiness for independent living; and to aid oppositional youth to reconsider unrealistic appraisals of their readiness.

Materials: Marker board, markers, pens, one copy for each student of "Messages on the Answering Machine", pens, several young people who have already moved into independent living.

1. ▲ **Inform** the class that they will be able to objectively assess their independent living readiness by taking a brief experiential quiz. **Distribute** copies of "Messages on the Answering Machine" and **ask** the class to write down how they would handle each of these messages if they were living independently and came home to find these messages on their answering machine.

2. ▲ **Direct** the students to each take a turn describing how they would handle each call, then **assist** the group to develop the optimal way each message could be addressed, and the problems that could result from using other approaches. **Aid** each student to compare their response with the optimal one, and to discover for themselves that they might be able to benefit from additional

training before moving into the community.

3. ▲ **Invite** teens who have recently moved into independent living sites to tell "war stories" about the results of not being fully trained to succeed independently, and to discuss what they've learned with they've learned. Alternately, if these youth are not available, **ask** the students to relay stories of friends they've known who moved out prematurely and encountered difficulties.

4. ▲ **Ask** the class to identify likely problem and crisis situations that young people can face if they move out into the community before they are fully ready. **Include** in the discussion an examination of who is most likely to be able to stay out in the community living independently: the youth who moves before fully ready or the youth who first receives all needed training and support. Ask the students to identify which result they would prefer to experience.

5. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Training can fully prepare you to live independently. Without this training, you are likely to make serious or painful mistakes.**

- **Youth who receive all needed training to live independently are more likely to be able to maintain their independent status.**

MESSAGES ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE

Hello. This is your landlady. You're getting a 72 Hour Eviction Notice and you know that means you must be out in 3 days. (Beep)

Sorry we missed you. This is the Ring-a-Ding-Ding Telephone Company. The new service we're offering is Call Waiting. It's only \$75 per month and we knew that you would want it so it will start being on your bill next month. (Beep)

I can't believe you're not there. Sally and I need to spend just a little time at your place-- a month at the most. Just leave the key under the mat. We're desperate, so make sure the key is there. (Beep)

This is your landlady again. I've decided that 72 hours is too long. Be out by tomorrow or else. (Beep)

Hi! This is the Dinghy Company. You've won a boat! It's your's free complete with a 33 half-power mini motor and ready to sail today! All you have to do is call 1-900-666-9878 by 6 PM to claim your prize and sail off in your brand new Krabbin Kruiser. (Beep)

Hullo..this is Shari. I'm feeling really bad. I may...I dunno...do something wild or silly... Wanna come get high with me? I'll come by with the stuff. No one will ever know. We'll both feel better. I'll be there in an hour. It'll cheer us up. (Beep)

This is your mother. I've changed my mind about you living alone. I think the emancipation laws let me just change my mind about this if I want to, and I'm mad about you never calling me so I'm making you move back home. Now, don't start telling me there's too much drinking at home for you to live here. I know the law, you just do what I say and be home tonight! (Beep)

Hullo...Shari again. Where were you? I did it all by myself... I'm real bad now. I think I'm fading out or something. I need a doctor or someone to talk to. I'm so dizzy... do you think I'll be alright? Get me some help quick...please... (Beep)