



Asset-Building Ideas

for Student Support Staff

As a school counselor, social worker, librarian, nurse, or other student support staff member, you come in contact with many students every day. While you won't be able to develop a relationship with each of them, there are things that are unique about your role that make you a key asset builder in your school. You can link students with other resources in the school or the community, you can be an adult in the school whom young people can talk to when they need extra support or advice, and you can provide students with information that can help them take care of themselves well and plan for the future. Even if you only see most students once in a while, there are steps you can take to build assets. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ **Post the list of assets** in your office or work area.
- ▶ **Greet students** whenever you see them—in or out of school.
- ▶ **Use the asset language** when talking with students, parents, or other staff.
- ▶ **Use the asset model** as part of any assessment and goal setting you do with youth.
- ▶ **Whenever you talk with parents, be sure to tell them what you like about their kids.**
- ▶ **When dealing with students who are struggling, work as many sincere compliments into the conversation as possible** (even if it's just one).
- ▶ **If your community has an asset-building initiative, get involved.**
- ▶ **Build your own assets;** you'll be better able to deal with your students if you take care of yourself.
- ▶ **Thank students** when you see them building assets for their peers.
- ▶ **Help coordinate information nights and orientations** to help students and parents locate classrooms, meet staff, learn about the services you provide, and ask questions before school begins in the fall.
- ▶ **Start a peer-helping program.** For example, offer new student support groups to help students adjust to a new environment. Those who graduate from the group can lead the group the next year.
- ▶ **Offer student-assistance programs that reflect an asset-building focus.** For example, when working with recovering chemically dependent students, focus as much on future plans and goals as you do on staying sober.
- ▶ **Involve students in strength interviews as they process challenges in their lives.** Ask questions such as: Who can you count on? What keeps you going? What inner resources do you have to draw on? Who can you turn to when you need extra support?
- ▶ **Serve as a liaison with the local radio and television stations** to share with your community the good news about your school.
- ▶ **When discussing specific students with other staff, focus as much on their personal strengths as on challenges.** If you believe in students, others will start to believe in them as well.
- ▶ **Work with teachers to incorporate asset assessment and development into group and classroom guidance activities.** For example, a career unit could include an interview where students talk about which assets they think they most need for on-the-job success.