



Reconnecting Youth: Implementation Tips

In February 2006, a number of SS/HS grantees and National Center staff participated in a Peer-to-Peer Discussion Teleconference on Implementing Reconnecting Youth. Reconnecting Youth (RY) is a school-based life-skills program that seeks to help high-risk youth in grades 9–12 achieve academically; manage anger; and prevent drug use, depression, and suicide.

Schools often face the challenge of keeping RY classes at an effective and manageable size (10–12 students) while providing the program to all the students who could benefit from it. Schools have addressed this issue through a number of strategies, including the following:

- Start with a small pilot program and set strict eligibility criteria. The success of this pilot will generate a demand for the program and justify hiring and/or training additional instructors.
- Establish strict eligibility criteria for students who will be allowed to participate, based upon both their need for the program and their ability to behave in the classroom.
- Hold RY sessions before or after school or during lunch so students do not miss other classes.
- Use RY as an alternative to suspension (or as an in-school suspension program).
- Modify RY so students can rotate in and out of the program as their behavior improves (or deteriorates). This allows a larger number of students to participate while maintaining a manageable class size.
- Provide academic credit for RY so students do not have to choose between RY and courses that fulfill graduation requirements.
- Rotate two RY groups so that every week, one group has three sessions and the other group has two sessions (each group alternates the number of sessions in succeeding weeks).

Schools using RY should remember that the program may be less effective if students do not receive all 80 lessons.

For a more extensive set of notes on this teleconference, click here <http://learn.aero.und.edu/pages.asp?PageID=97591>.

For a fact sheet on Reconnecting Youth, click here <http://www.promoteprevent.org/documents/EBI/R.Y.pdf>.