S.P.A.R.K. Pre-Teen Mentoring Program
Components & Objectives

Core Curriculum

Connections and Goals:
- The participants will get to know their facilitators, mentors and fellow classmates.
- The participants will receive an overview and understanding of the program.
- The participants will identify personal short-term and long-term goals.

Your Experience, Unlocked
- The facilitator and participants will continue to build rapport.
- The participants will receive an overview of how **Thought** creates their experiences.
- The participants will be introduced to the meaning of **SPARK** as it relates to this program.

Decision Making, The SPARK Highway
- The participants will have a clear understanding of the Thought Chain.
- The participants will understand how the Thought Chain relates to decision making.
- The participants will identify how to apply the Thought Chain and Thought Highway when making decisions.

Feeling the Rainbow
- The participants will recognize that **Thought** creates feeling
- The participants will learn how their feelings can intensify and weaken.
- The participants will learn that thoughts and feelings don't have to impact their potential.

Finding Your SPARK
- The participants will learn that their gut instinct, common sense, intuition and wisdom are their **SPARK**.
- The participants will understand that their **SPARK** is their own guidance system.
- The participants will realize that their **SPARK** is always available and can't be broken.

Growing Your Creativity and Potential
- The participants will understand fact of **Thought**.
- The participants will come to realize for themselves that thoughts constantly come and go.
- The participants will understand that **Thought** is behind all creativity.

Self-Confidence
- The participants will learn to recognize that self-confidence is a natural state created from the **SPARK** inside us all.
- The participants will learn that their natural self-confidence can sometimes be covered up by their thinking.
- The participants will understand that the less people evaluate themselves, the more their **SPARK** naturally shines through.

Dealing With Stress and Anxiety
- The participants will be able to define and identify stress and anxiety.
- The participants will understand what part thinking plays in feeling stressed and anxious.
- The participants will realize, through awareness, that they can decide how much power to give their stress and anxiety.

Communication and Reactions
- The participants will be able to define and identify different states of mind.
- The participants will understand state of mind can impact communication and reactions.
- The participants will see how to use their state of mind and the state of mind of others as a navigation system when communicating and reacting.

Appreciating the Diversity Among Us
- The participants will understand that everyone has different views and preferences.
- The participants will understand that all views and preferences come from individual thinking and that we are always living in our own separate realities.
- The participants will understand that other people's views and preferences are neither right nor wrong—they are just different.

The Future Is Yours
- The participants will review what they have learned in this program.
- The participants will demonstrate their own use of their **SPARK**.
- The participants will demonstrate the ability to see their goals and dreams as ever evolving.
- The participants will see that possibilities and their potential are infinite.

Graduation
- The participants will complete a Post-Program Survey.
- The participants receive completion certificates and individual awards.
- Teachers, staff and parents will participate in the graduation refreshments and reflections.

Topic-Specific Modules

Relationships Module
Relationships
- The participants will learn the importance of respecting the differences in others when in relationships.
- The participants will see the correlation between separate realities and relationships.
- The participants will identify the benefits of communication in times of conflict.

Leadership Module
Understanding Your Community
- The participants will be able to define what giving is and identify who is in their community.
- The participants will understand the importance of community members.
- The participants will realize the impact they can have on their community by using their **SPARK** as a guide.
- The participants will plan a community project of their own.

Using Your SPARK To Be a Good Role Model
- The participants will learn what it means to be a positive role model.
- The participants will realize classmates and peers may look up to them as role models.
- The participants will see that they are capable of teaching and helping their peers.
- The participants will realize how they can use their **SPARK** to help others around them.

Bullying, Inside-Out
- The participants will be able to identify the reasons why people bully others.
- The participants will realize that it is impossible to harm someone's **SPARK**.
- The participants will see that even if they are feeling hurt, they are not damaged.
- The participants will demonstrate their understanding by creating an Inside-Out Anti-Bullying Campaign poster.

Life Skills Module
Academic Stress to Academic Success
- The participants will see how their thoughts can create barriers to academic success.
- The participants will understand the correlation between academic success and thinking.
- The participants will understand that their academic potential is infinite.

Framework for Prevention

This framework for prevention depicts The Cypress Initiative's view on cultivating human and creative potential within all lives through understanding of the mind and the human experience. Much research has been conducted around the implications of understanding how the mind works to create the human experience through recognition. This understanding has been proven to naturally reduce risk around high-school dropout, teen delinquency, bullying, teen violence, suicide, depression, and anxiety, while building resiliency around academic success, emotional well-being, and social-emotional skills. (Kelley, T. M., Lambert, E., & Pransky, J.).

According to the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB)*,* by Icek Ajzen, predictors of dropout, delinquency, academic failure, depression, and teen violence are *attitudes*, *subjective norms* and *perceived control*, meaning a person's perception of his or her own capability to perform specific behaviors and/or meet specific results. Therefore, unlike many popular prevention models, this framework is individual-based, because resiliency and success in these areas is created from the inside-out. Consequently, if the participant understands the mind and the human experience, success will not **require** the participation of environmental factors. Yet, through the powerful research organized and presented in the *Social Development Model* (SDM)*,* by R.F. Catalano and J. D. Hawkins, we found that active participation and connection to a mentor, school, and community have been proven to contribute to increased positive outcomes of the overall program.

Target Audience: Youth

The S.P.A.R.K. Program increases connectedness, reduces risk factors and builds resiliency to promote emotional well-being and school success in youth.

Though TPB predicts undesired behavior in youth that can be identified and addressed through *attitudes, subjective norms* and *perceived control*. The S.P.A.R.K. Core Curriculum is specifically designed to teach an understanding of the human experience, which subsequently creates desired changes around *attitudes, subjective norms* and *perceived control*.

Inputs:

Core Curriculum: The Core Curriculum consists of 13 lessons that focus on an understanding of the mind and human experience for the purpose of reducing risk, uncovering resiliency and potential, and increasing a feeling of connectedness within one self. The curriculum teaches youth an understanding of the mind and it connects knowledge and skills learned in order to help youth navigate their personal life experiences and circumstances.

Supplemental Modules: Modules are supplemental lessons used after the participants have been taught the foundation through Core Curriculum. They are optional lessons that are separated into groups (modules) by topic and should be chosen based on the participant's specific needs. All modules were created to connect the knowledge and skills learned through the Core Curriculum to the participants' personal life experiences and circumstances.

Facilitators/Mentors:

Research states that it takes approximately 6-12 months to see desired outcomes from mentoring. Additionally, mentoring relationships that last one year or longer have shown the biggest improvements in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes. Finally, research also states that mentor pairs should spend at least 1-2 hours together, per week, for at least one school year. Because of this, adding modules that are relevant to your participants and providing one-on-one and/or group mentoring in addition to the Core Curriculum are both encouraged.

One-on-One/Small Group Mentoring: Facilitators/Mentors act as guides to the participants, helping them connect the dots of learning and providing weekly opportunities for positive interactions with an adult in their lives. Facilitators/Mentors also provide a healthy space to build a relationship and connectedness that supports youth and the skills learned.

If incorporating one-on-one or small-group mentoring, it is suggested that the mentoring be facilitated by recruits who have been trained in the curriculum. Also, because of the bond formed through the teaching of the curriculum, it is strongly suggested that the mentor/s be the same person/s facilitating the Core Curriculum. If the Core Curriculum is being taught every other week, participants may receive one-on-one or small-group mentoring on the alternate weeks. If the Core Curriculum is being taught weekly, the mentoring may occur before, after of in between the lessons.

School and/or Organization

School/Organization support for the purpose of disseminating the Core Curriculum is essential. Research suggests that the quality and longevity of any mentoring program is directly tied to communication with staff and sufficient availability to resources and safe spaces. Mentoring programs require buy-in from the schools/organizations they work with and can help achieve this by involving the school/organization in setting outcomes, providing a safe and dedicated classroom, and using best practices to set these standards (Burrus, J., Roberts, R.).

S.P.A.R.K. Facilitator Training: Facilitator Training in the foundation and implementation of the curriculum, is highly suggested for any educators or mentors who will facilitate the program. The Cypress Initiative, Inc. provides access to teacher-training resources, as well as, on-site and virtual training opportunities. For more information on S.P.A.R.K. certified facilitator training, please contact us at info@cypressinitiative.org or call 1 (813) 662-6920.

Community

According to research done by the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care and the SDM, a feeling of connectedness within the community was also a protective factor in reducing the risk of anxiety, depression, disruptive behavior, dropout and substance abuse. Therefore, the S.P.A.R.K. Mentoring program also provides a community-involvement component within the Leadership Module of each S.P.A.R.K. curriculum level.

Community Involvement: The S.P.A.R.K. program empowers youth to utilize their leadership capability and creativity in giving back to their community. All participants being taught the Leadership Module will choose a community project they would like to complete as a group. They will discuss and decide upon their projects during the Community Engagement lesson of the Leadership Module. Completing this lesson and project provides participants the opportunity to bond with their community, and it empowers them to see that they can be a vital asset to that community.

SPARK Curriculum/Materials

Teaches youth an understanding of the mind and connects knowledge and skills learned to help youth navigate their personal life experiences and circumstances.

Increases a feeling of connectedness to themselves.

Facilitators/Mentors

Connects the dots of learning and increases positive interaction.

Builds a relationship and connectedness that supports youth and the skills learned.

Increases a feeling of connectedness to a positive adult in their life.

Youth

The S.P.A.R.K. Program increases connectedness, reduces risk factors and uncovers resiliency to promote emotional well-being and school success in youth.

Community

Empowers youth to utilize their leadership and creativity in giving back to their community.

Increases a feeling of connectedness to their community.

Schools/Organizations/Classrooms

Hosts a safe space for youth to gather.

Creates sense of buy-in via trained facilitators.

Increases a feeling of connectedness to their school/organization.

Logic Model

Target Group	Youth: Ages 6 - 22
Goals	The S.P.A.R.K. Program reduces risk factors and uncovers resiliency to promote emotional well-being and school success in youth. The S.P.A.R.K. program addresses the following protective factors. • Academic Success • Emotional Competency • Self-Efficacy Skills • Communication Skills • Conflict-Resolution Skills • Connectedness to Family, School and Community
Objectives	Teach youth an understanding of the mind in order to reduce risky behavior and uncover resiliency (Lessons) Connect skills learned to life experiences and circumstances (Generalization) Build a relationship and connectedness that supports participants and the skills learned (Mentoring) Empower participants to utilize their leadership capability and creativity in giving back to their community (Community Involvement)
Challenges	Many young people come to school with an array of the following risk factors: • Aggressive/Reactive/Impulsive Behavior • Poor Academic Success • Lack of School Commitment • Depression, Anxiety • Low Confidence/Self-esteem • Low Social Skills • Disrespect Towards Authority Many schools do not have the resources to implement social-emotional learning programs or curricula in social and communication skills, and in emotional competency.
Activities (Strategies)	**Curriculum Lessons** **Core Curriculum:** The S.P.A.R.K. Core Curriculum is designed to be taught during or after school, throughout the school year, by classroom teachers or certified S.P.A.R.K. facilitators. It can be taught once a week throughout the school year, or once every other week when implementing the *one-on-one mentoring* component in between lessons. The Core Curriculum consists of lessons that focus on an understanding of the human experience in order to teach participants personal and interpersonal skills needed to navigate life successfully.

Activities (Strategies)	**Topic-Specific Modules:** Additional lessons, also taught in a classroom setting. Based on the needs of the audience, topic-specific modules can be included into the program. Example modules: Relationships, Leadership, Life Skills, Sex Education and Teen Pregnancy Prevention, and Teen Parenting.
	Curriculum Techniques:
	• Group discussions
	• Role plays
	• Student workbook
	• Thought chain / decision making
	• Creativity challenges
	• Videos
	• Trivia
	• Teachable moments / stories
	• Relatable story sharing
	• Real-life examples
	• Demonstrations
	One-on-One Mentoring: If the Core Curriculum is being taught every other week, participants receive mentoring, on the bi-weeks, in various life areas (goal setting, rapport building, social and emotional skills).
	Community Involvement: The S.P.A.R.K. Mentoring curriculum also provides a community-involvement project through the Leadership Module. Participants complete various volunteer projects to help support local nonprofits. All participants being taught the Leadership Module will choose a community project they would like to complete as a group. They will discuss and decide upon their projects during the Community Engagement lesson of the Leadership Module. Completing this lesson and project provides participants the opportunity to bond with their community, and it empowers them to see that they can be a vital asset to that community.
	S.P.A.R.K. Facilitator Training: Foundational training is strongly suggested for of any schools, organizations or educators who plan to facilitate the program. The Cypress Initiative, Inc. provides access to online training resources and webinars, as well as on-site and virtual training opportunities. For more information on S.P.A.R.K.-certified facilitator training, please contact us at info@cypressinitiative.org or call 1(813) 662-6920.

Theory of Change (Outputs)	The S.P.A.R.K. Program reduces risk factors and uncovers resiliency to promote emotional well-being and school success in youth via an understanding of the mind and human experience. Through this the participants acquire: • Insight into thought recognition • Insight into inner resilience, clear-mindedness, and mindfulness • Understanding of the dynamics of feelings • Insight into self- esteem • Ability to use "thought chain" in decision-making • Increased positive connection with themselves, others and their community
Short-Term Outcomes	Participants who complete the S.P.A.R.K. program, demonstrate: • Increased resilience • Increased inhibition and impulse control • Increased problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict-resolution skills • Increased communication skills • Increased positive outlook and greater sense of well-being
Long-Term Impact	Participants who complete the S.P.A.R.K. program demonstrate: • Increased academic success • Increased self- confidence and self-worth • Increased self-regulation • Increased engagement in positive relationships • Increased acceptance in differences in others • Engagement in pro-social behaviors
Measurements	**Inputs:** • Fidelity Scales • Teacher feedback **Activities:** • Service Delivery Documentation **Outputs:** • Pre-and post-curriculum surveys • Student Feedback • Teacher Input **Short Term Outcomes:** • Resilience, DERS, CDP, 3PI and UP scales **Long Term Impact:** • School Attendance Reports • School Discipline Reports • Student Grade Reports