

# Evaluation of the ARISE Foundation Life Management Skills Program Targeting High-Risk Youth in the District of Columbia

April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007



Proud, newly certified ARISE Life-Skills Instructors Washington, D.C.



ARISE Foundation  
Susan and Edmund Benson, Founders  
Toll Free: 1-888-680-6100 • [www.ariselifeskills.org](http://www.ariselifeskills.org)

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*The evaluative report of the ARISE program in the Washington D.C. area for 2006-2007 concluded that the program was extremely effective. The evaluation was highly comprehensive assessing multiple dimensions of the program. ARISE's training practices and effectiveness were reviewed, as well as the competency of the instructors ARISE has certified. The evaluation also considered the satisfaction of youth and instructors involved in the program. In all cases, the goals ARISE had set for itself were exceeded. On most of the evaluative tools, the program revealed a dramatic improvement from the previous year. The instructors proved to be competent in their instruction, happy with their training, and highly satisfied with the ARISE program. The youth revealed that they are retaining the material from their lessons while being highly pleased with their ARISE group sessions.*

Natalie Ciarocco, Ph. D.  
Program Evaluator



## Introduction

ARISE Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization that develops and implements life-skill lessons to at-risk populations. The mission of ARISE is to introduce valuable life skills to youth and adults, enabling them to achieve their highest potential through training and education. ARISE provides 40 original curricula containing over 260 lessons to organizations in the Washington D.C. area. In addition, they provide training to these organizations on how to implement these lessons to their fullest. ARISE continues to monitor and support participating organizations with the program.

During the evaluative period, over 100 organizations participated in the ARISE program in the Washington, D.C. area. During that time, 138 people were trained as ARISE Life Management Skills Instructors. This report is a complete summary of the ARISE program from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 that provides results regarding the effectiveness of the program.

Throughout the evaluative period, ARISE has collected data about the effectiveness of their work. This was accomplished through a variety of data collection techniques, such as self-report questionnaire and observations. In addition, ARISE evaluated many dimensions of their program. They evaluated their training practices and effectiveness, the competency of the instructors, and the satisfaction of youth and trainers with the program.



## Executive Summary

The following is a quick summary goals and results included in this report:

- **Goal:** 75% of youth will express satisfaction with the program  
**Result:** 90% of the youth expressed satisfaction with the program
- **Goal:** 75% of youth will score at least 80% on the chapter quizzes  
**Result:** 87% of youth scored at least an 80% on the chapter quizzes
- **Goal:** 75% of staff trained will indicate satisfaction with the training  
**Result:** 98% of staff trained indicated satisfaction with training
- **Goal:** 75% of staff trained will demonstrate competency in lesson planning and implementation at the completion of training  
**Result:** 100% of staff trained demonstrated competency in lesson planning and implementation at the completion of training
- **Goal:** 75% of certified instructors will express satisfaction with the program  
**Result:** 92% of staff trained expressed satisfaction with the program
- **Goal:** 75% of certified instructors will demonstrate competency in program implementation  
**Result:** 86% of certified instructors demonstrated competency in program implementation

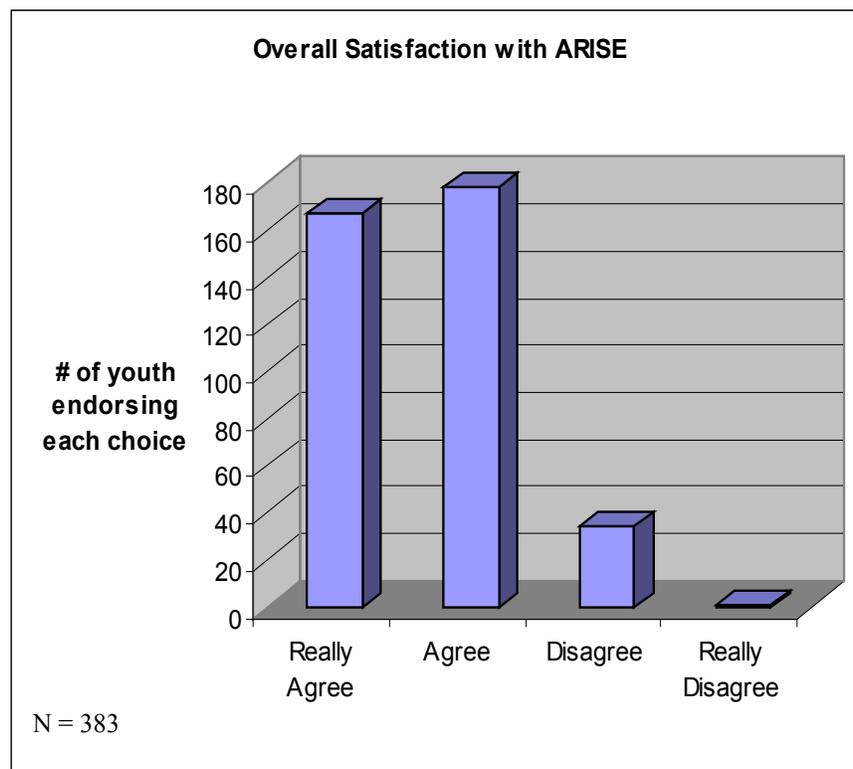
**Summary: All performance goals were exceeded.**



## Youth Exit Survey

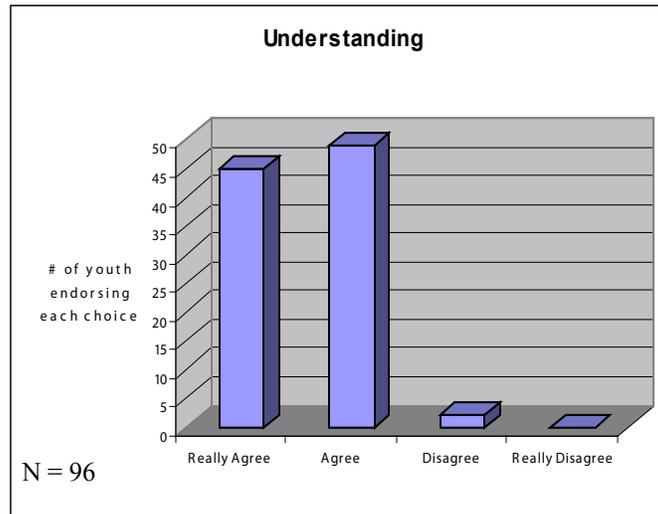
It is expected that 75% of the youth will express satisfaction with the program upon leaving the ARISE group lessons. This is measured with an exit survey. The exit surveys were completed by 97 youth ranging in age from 7 to 22 years with an average age of 14.63 years. The sample consisted of 55 males and 42 females with an ethnic make-up of 94% black, 3%, Hispanic, 2% white, and 1% other. The youth were asked to complete four questions on a Likert scale from 4 “really agree” to 1 “really disagree”.

**Overall Summary:** It was expected that 75% of the youth would express satisfaction with the program upon leaving the ARISE group lessons. In combining the four questions on the exit survey, overall 90% of the youth expressed satisfaction as they exited the ARISE program, as indicated by selecting either “really agreed” or “agreed” to each question. The average rating overall was a 3.33 out of a maximum of 4.00. The expectation was exceeded. The results also indicate a vast improvement over the previous year. In the 2005-2006 evaluation youth reported the same level of satisfaction only 78% of the time. This displays a 12% increase in level of satisfaction with the ARISE program.

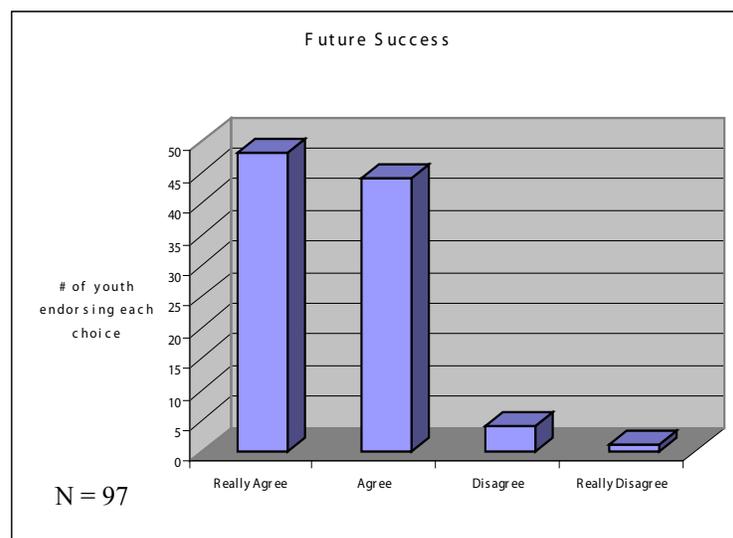


## Results:

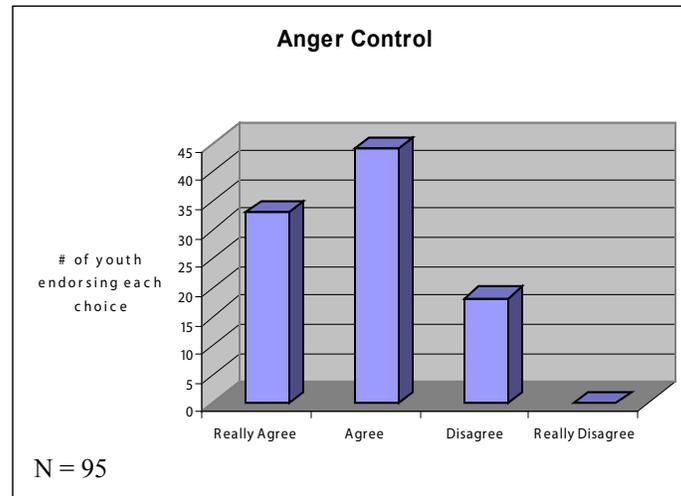
**Understanding:** When asked if the ARISE instructors helped them understand the lessons, youth reported an average of 3.45 out of a maximum of 4.00. Forty-seven percent of the youth “really agreed” that the instructor helped them understand the lessons, while an additional 51% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 98% of the youth expressed satisfaction with the instructor’s ability to help them understand the lessons.



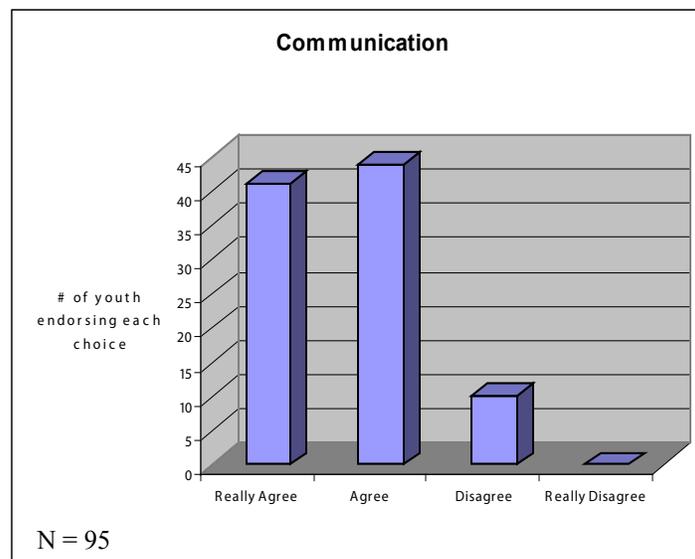
**Success:** When asked whether the youth felt the ARISE lessons would help them be successful after leaving the facility, youth reported an average of 3.42 out of a maximum of 4.00. Forty-nine percent of the youth “really agreed” that the ARISE lessons would help make them successful, while an additional 45% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 94% of the youth expressed satisfaction with the contribution the ARISE lessons would have on their future success.



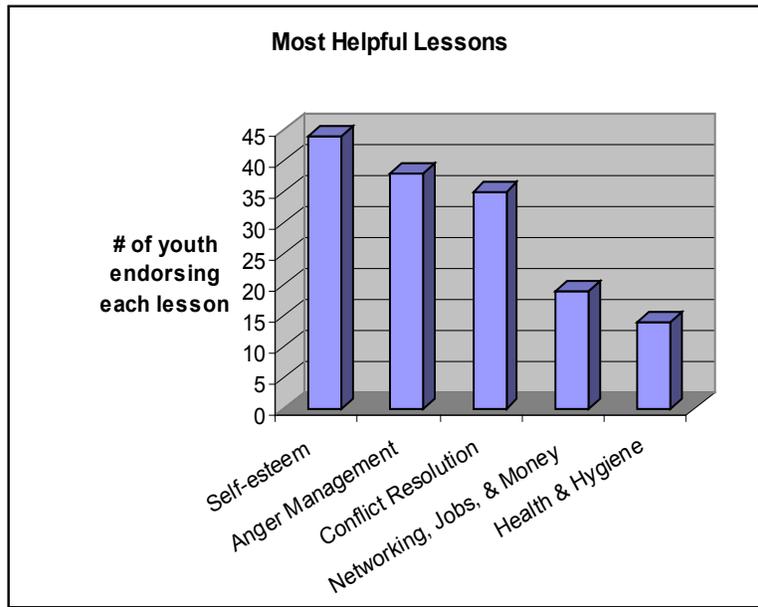
**Anger Control:** When asked whether the ARISE program taught them to better control their anger, youth reported an average of 3.14 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-five percent of the youth “really agreed” that the ARISE program taught them to better control their anger, while an additional 46% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 81% of the youth expressed satisfaction with the anger control skills they learned in the ARISE program.



**Communication:** When asked whether the ARISE program taught them better communication skills, youth reported an average of 3.31 out of a maximum of 4.00. Forty-three percent of the youth “really agreed” that the ARISE program taught them better communication, while an additional 46% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 89% of the youth expressed satisfaction with the communication skills they learned in the ARISE program.



**Lessons:** Youth were also asked to indicate the lessons that were most helpful. They selected those lessons from a list of five including, self-esteem, anger management, conflict resolution, networking, jobs, and money, and health and hygiene. The results are as follows: self-esteem was selected 29% of the time, anger management was endorsed 25% of the time, conflict resolution was selected 23% of the time, networking, jobs, and money received 13% of the vote, and health and hygiene was selected as the lesson that helped most 9% of the time.

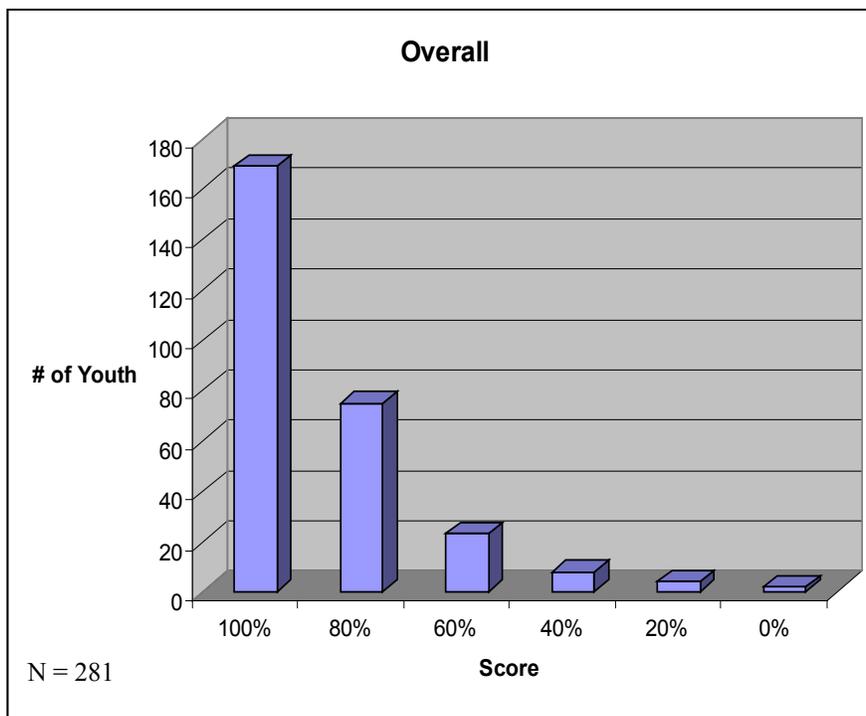


\*Youth were able to select more than one response

## Chapter Quizzes

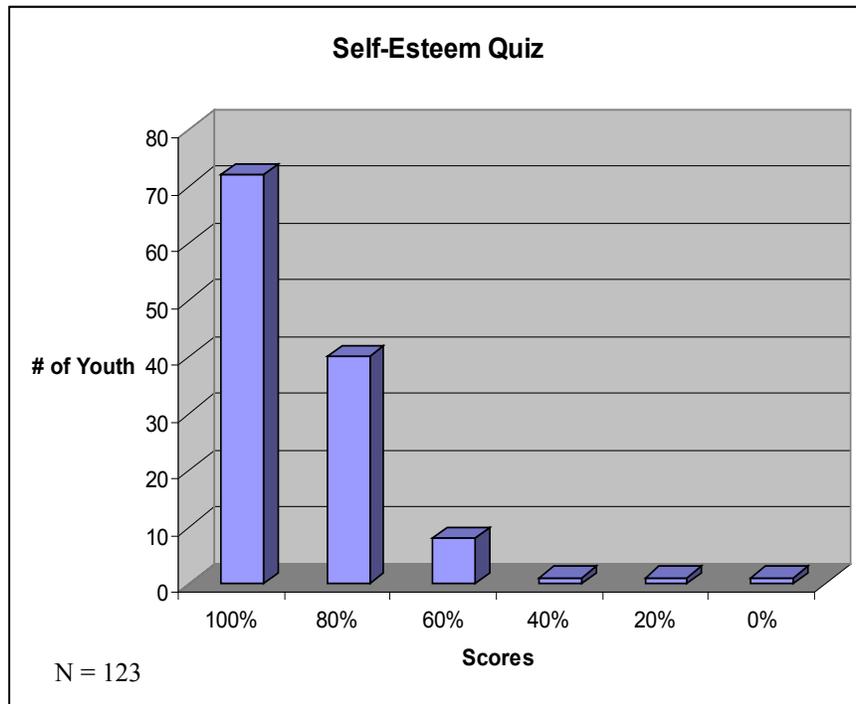
Many of the ARISE curricula contain chapter quizzes to monitor what the youth are retraining from the groups lessons. It is expected that 75% of the youth will score at least an 80% on the chapter quizzes. The chapter quizzes were completed by 281 youth. Each chapter quiz contained 5 multiple-choice questions reflecting important information from the given chapter. Quizzes were obtained for the following seven topics; anger management, domestic abuse, substance abuse, dropping out of school, networking, jobs and money, self-esteem, and violence and conflict.

**Overall summary:** It was expected that 75% of the youth will score at least an 80% on the chapter quizzes. This goal was undoubtedly met. Each quiz covered one of seven different ARISE chapters. At least 75% of the youth score an 80% or higher on the each chapter quiz. Overall, 281 chapter quizzes were administered to youth and 87% of the youth displayed success on the quizzes by scoring at least an 80%. Youth are retaining the information presented to them throughout the chapter.

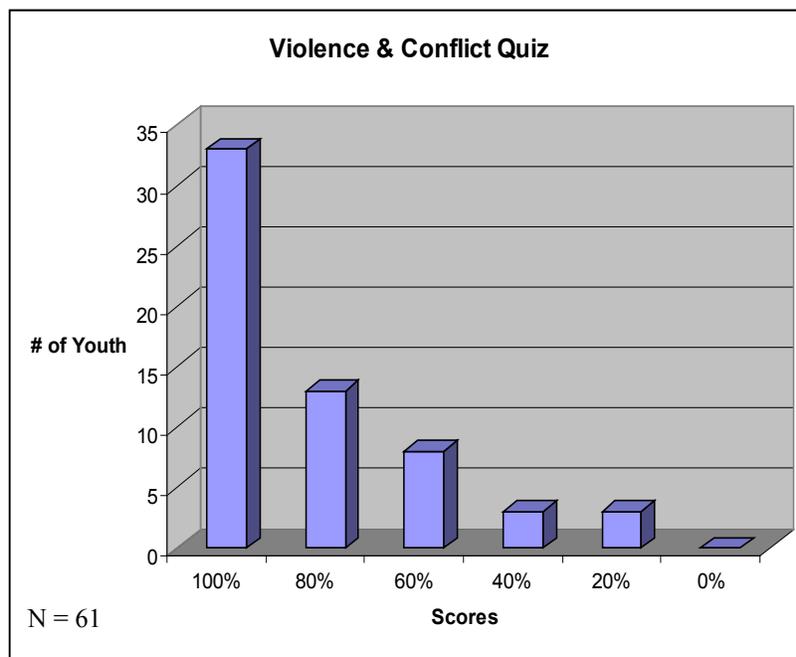


## Results:

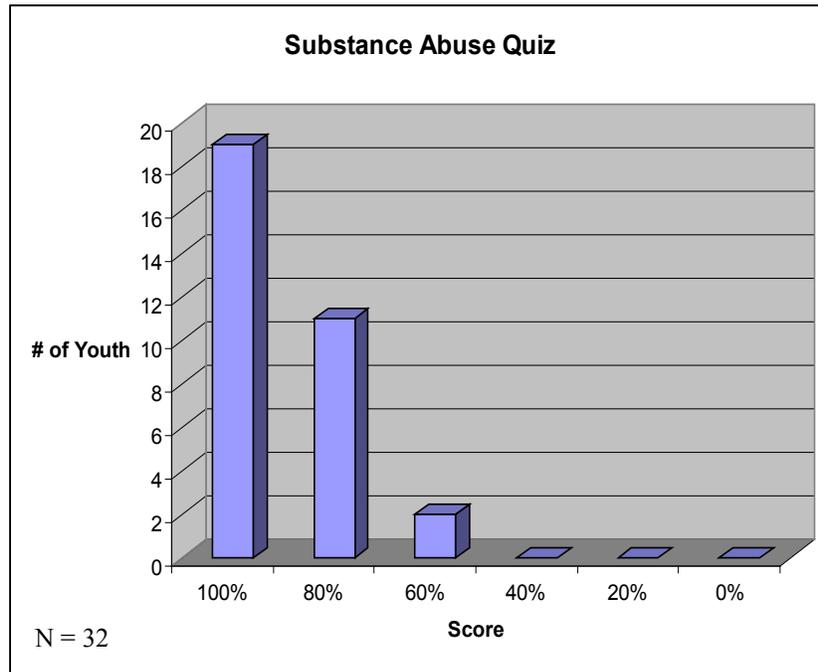
**Self-esteem:** One hundred and twenty-three youth completed the self-esteem quiz. Ninety-one percent of the youth display competence by scoring an 80% or better on the quiz.



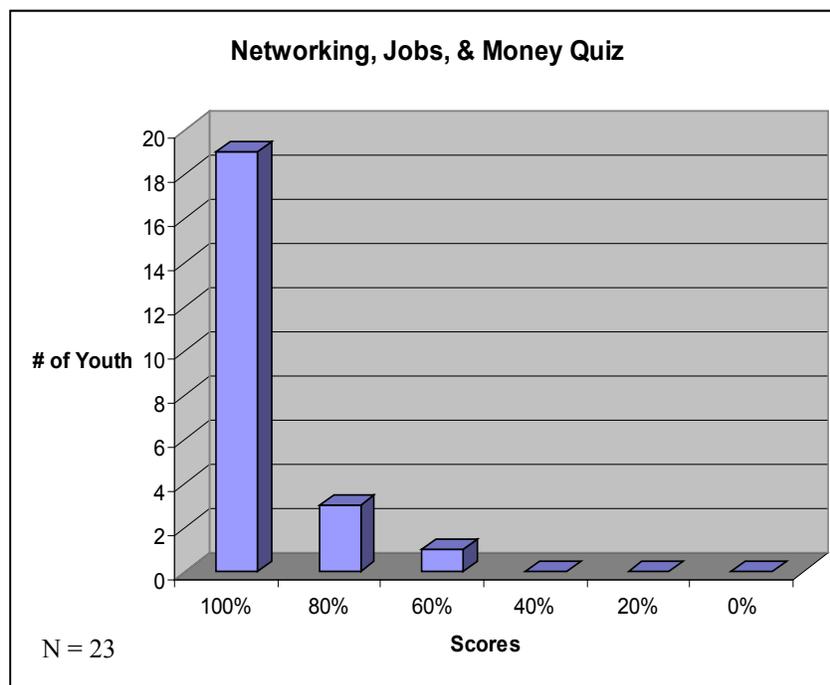
**Violence and Conflict:** Sixty-one youth were quizzed on the violence and conflict chapter. Seventy-five percent of the youth met the goal of scoring 80% or above on the quiz.



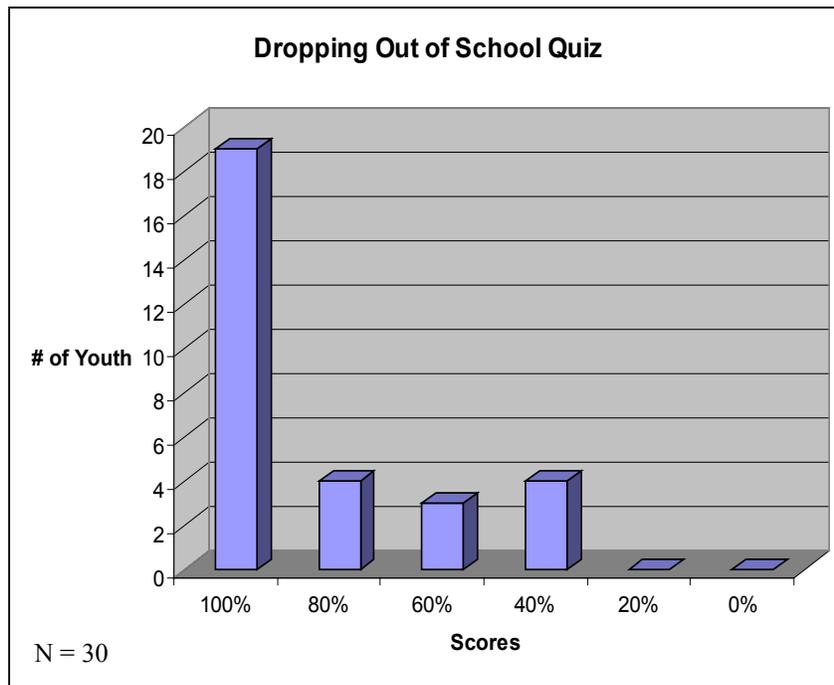
**Substance Abuse:** Thirty-two youth completed the quiz on the substance abuse chapter. Ninety-four percent of the youth scores an 80% or higher on the quiz.



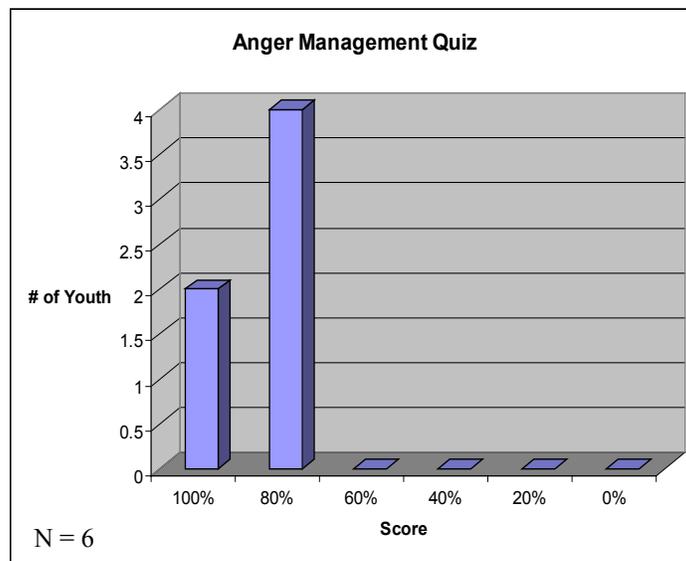
**Networking, Jobs, and Money:** Twenty-three youth completed the jobs, networking, and money chapter quiz. Ninety-six percent of the youth retained the material and scored an 80% or above on the quiz.



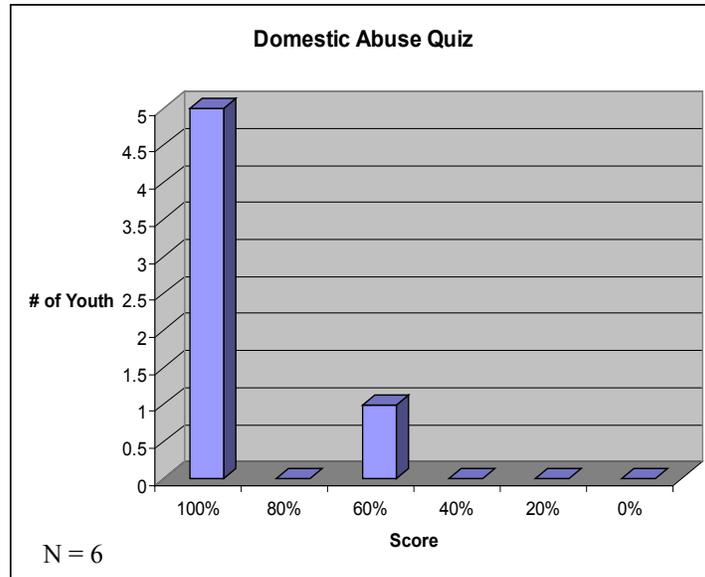
**Dropping Out of School:** Thirty youth were quizzed on the dropping out of school chapter. Seventy-seven percent of the youth scored an 80% or above on the quiz.



**Anger Management:** Six youth completed the quiz on the anger management chapter. All of the youth (100%) scored an 80% or above on the quiz.



**Domestic Abuse:** Six youth completed the quiz on the domestic abuse chapter. Eighty-three percent of the youth display competence by scoring an 80% or above on the quiz.

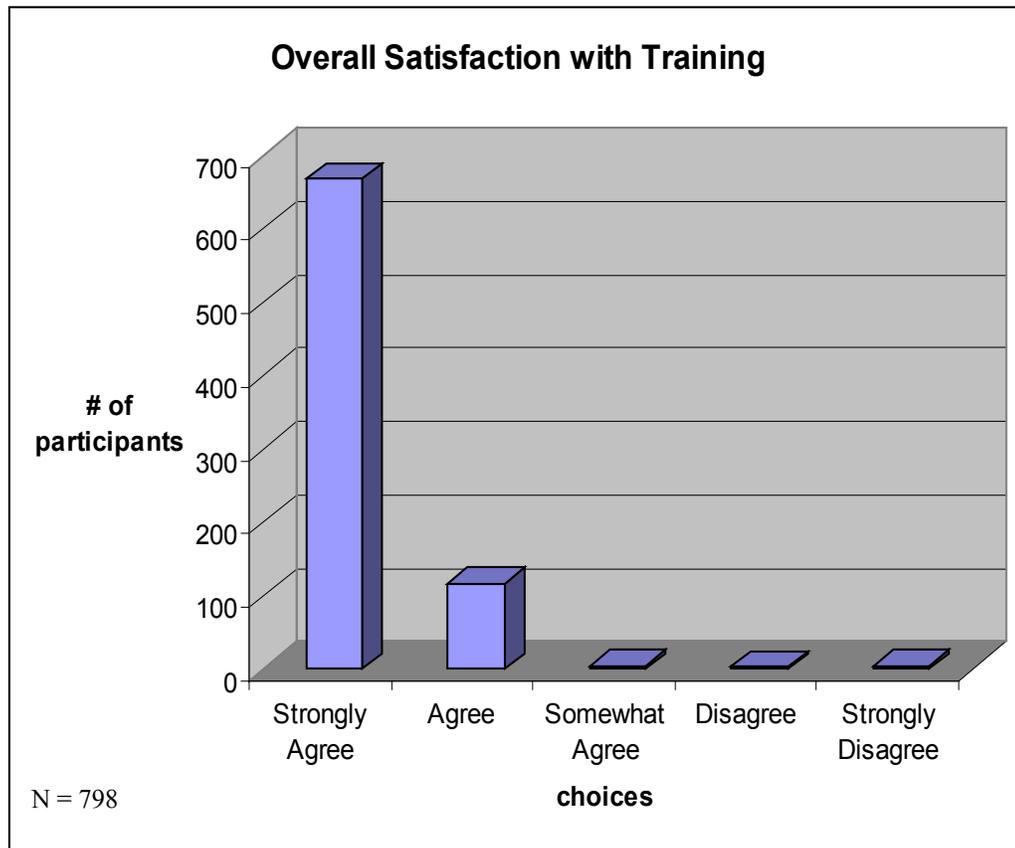


## Training Evaluation

The ARISE Life-Skills Instructor Training is a one-day (7-hour) training that certifies participants as ARISE Life-Skills Instructors. Attendees are thoroughly introduced to the ARISE curricula and how to utilize it effectively. Participants also learn classroom management; skills and tips on how to handle troubled, disinterested, angry, and disruptive youth.

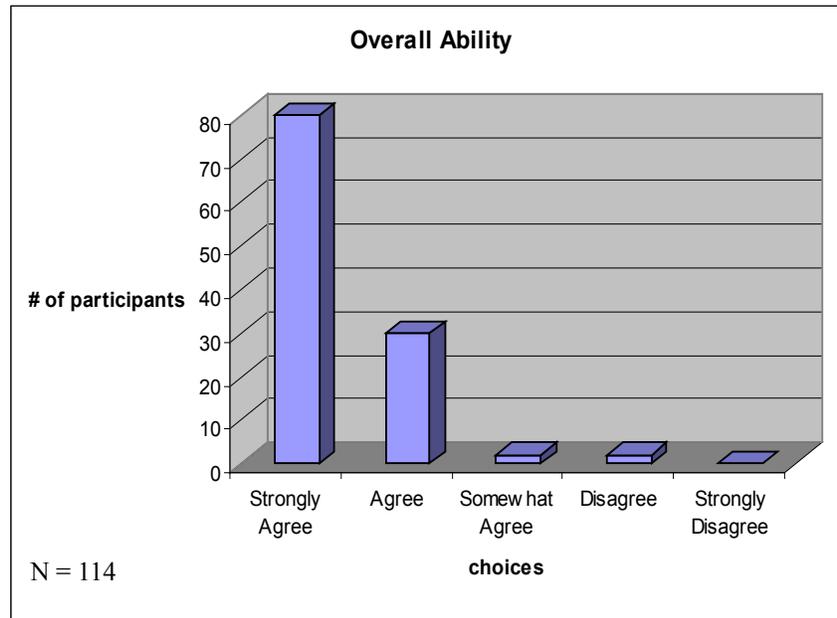
It is expected that 75% of the staff training evaluations collected will indicate satisfaction with the training, as measured by the training evaluation. Participants were asked to complete seven questions on a Likert scale from 5 “strongly agree” to 1 “strongly disagree.” The training evaluations were completed by 115 participants throughout 9 different trainings conducted in 2006-2007.

**Overall Summary:** It was expected that 75 % of the staff training evaluations collected would indicate satisfaction with the training, as measured by the training evaluation. By combining all six questions on the training evaluation, overall 98% of the staff satisfaction with the ARISE training as indicated by selected either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” to each question. The average rating overall was a 4.75 out of a maximum of 5.00. The expectation was exceeded. The results also indicate an improvement over the previous year. In the 2005-2006 evaluation of those that participated in training, the same level of satisfaction only 91% of the time. This displays a 7% increase in level of satisfaction with training overall.

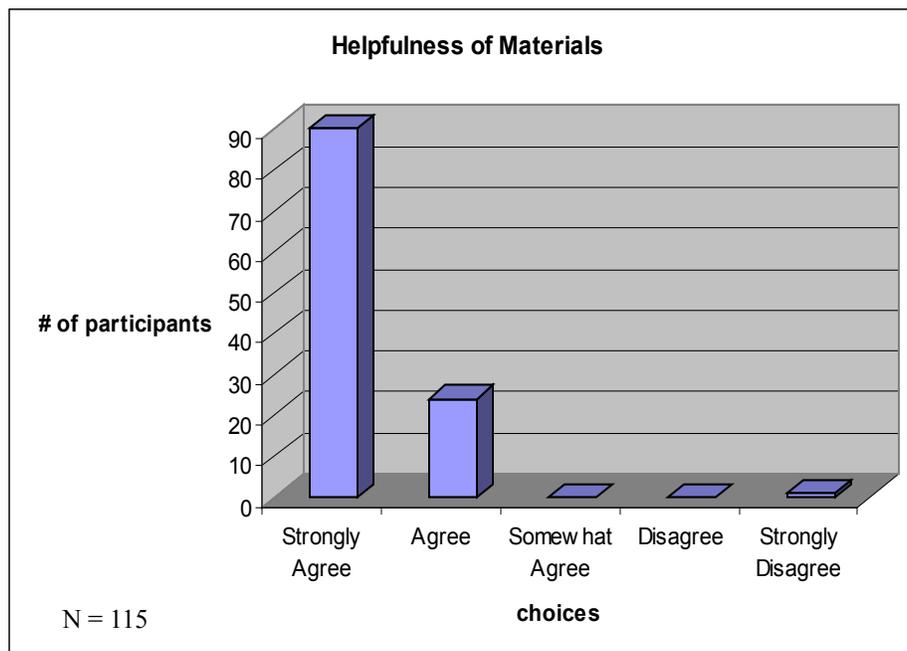


## Results:

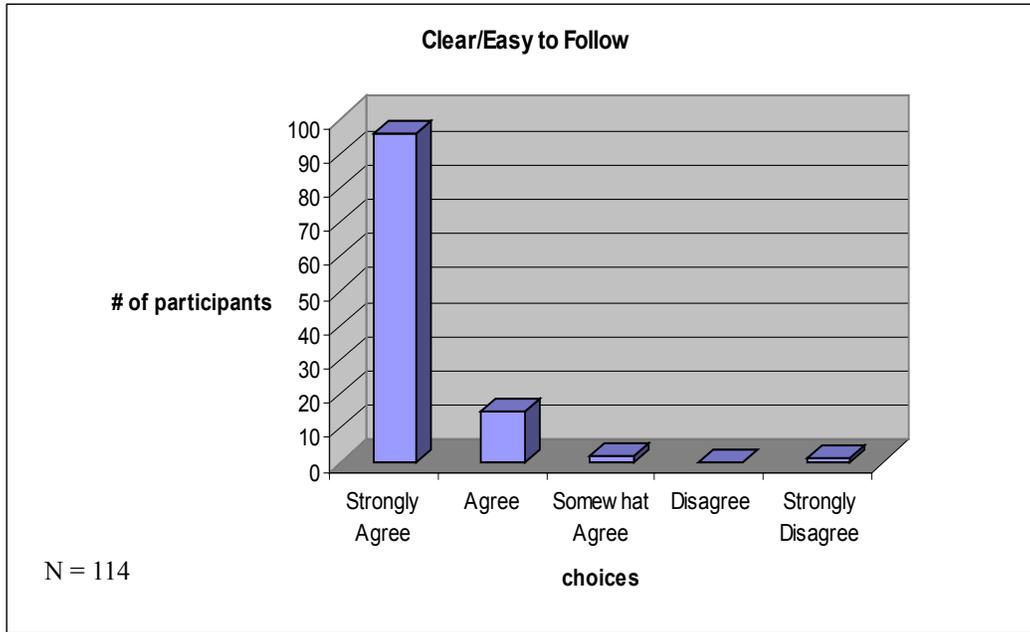
*Overall Ability:* When asked if the ARISE training left them feeling prepared to teach the ARISE Life-Management Skills program, participants reported an average of 4.57 out of a maximum of 5.00. Seventy percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the training prepared them to teach the lessons, while an additional 26% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 96% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the preparation the training gave them.



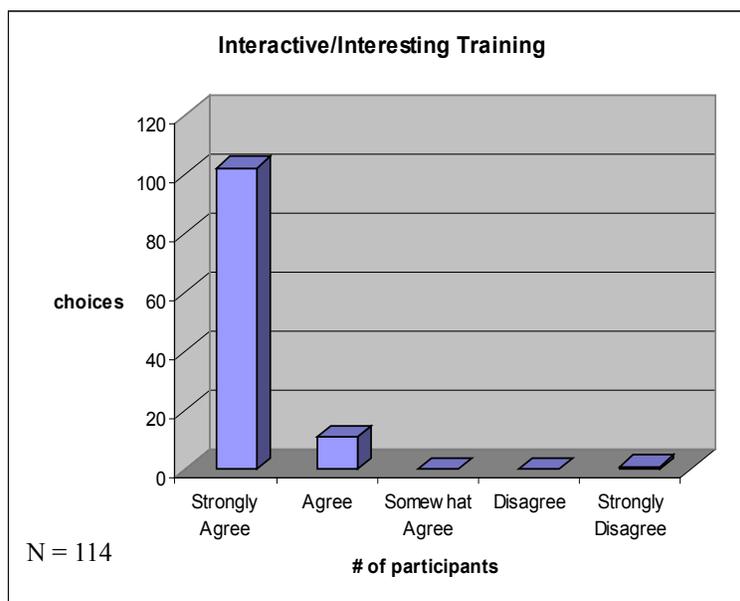
*Helpfulness of Material:* When asked if the material presented during the ARISE training was helpful, participants reported an average of 4.67 out of a maximum of 5.00. Seventy-eight percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the training material was helpful, while an additional 21% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 99% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the material presented during training.



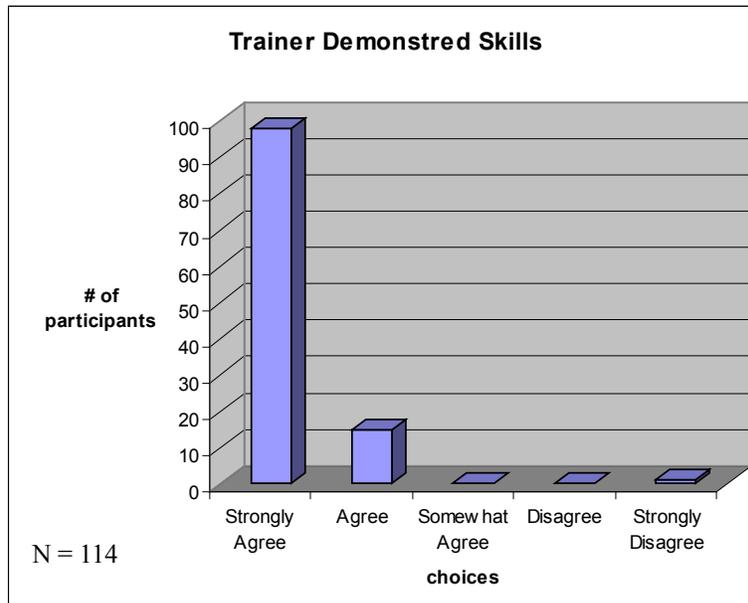
*Clear and Easy to Follow:* When asked if the ARISE training was clear and easy to follow, participants reported an average of 4.74 out of a maximum of 5.00. Eighty-four percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the training material was clear and easy to follow, while an additional 13% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 97% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the clarity and difficulty of the training.



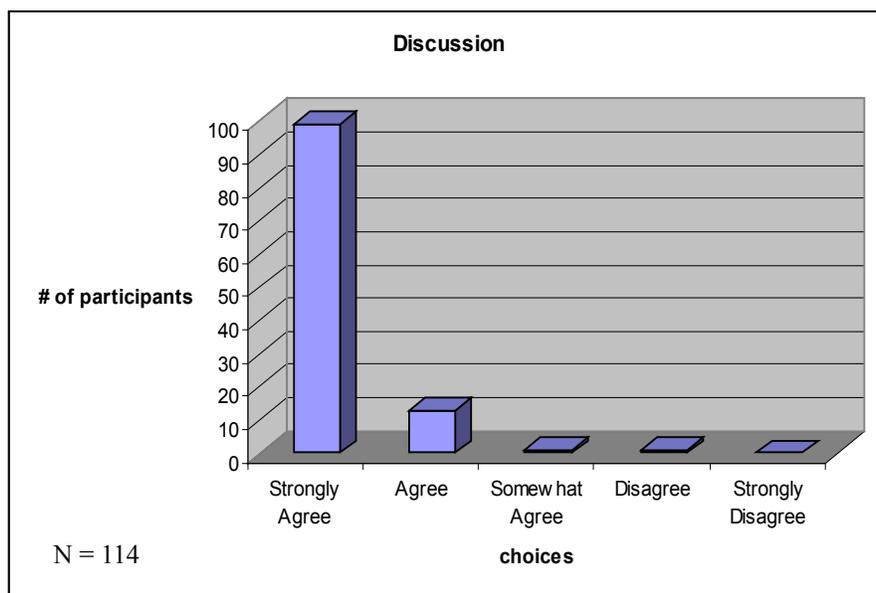
*Interactive/Interest:* When asked whether the ARISE training was interactive and interesting, participants reported an average of 4.82 out of a maximum of 5.00. Eighty-nine percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the training was interactive and interesting, while an additional 10% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 99% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the interaction and appeal of the training.



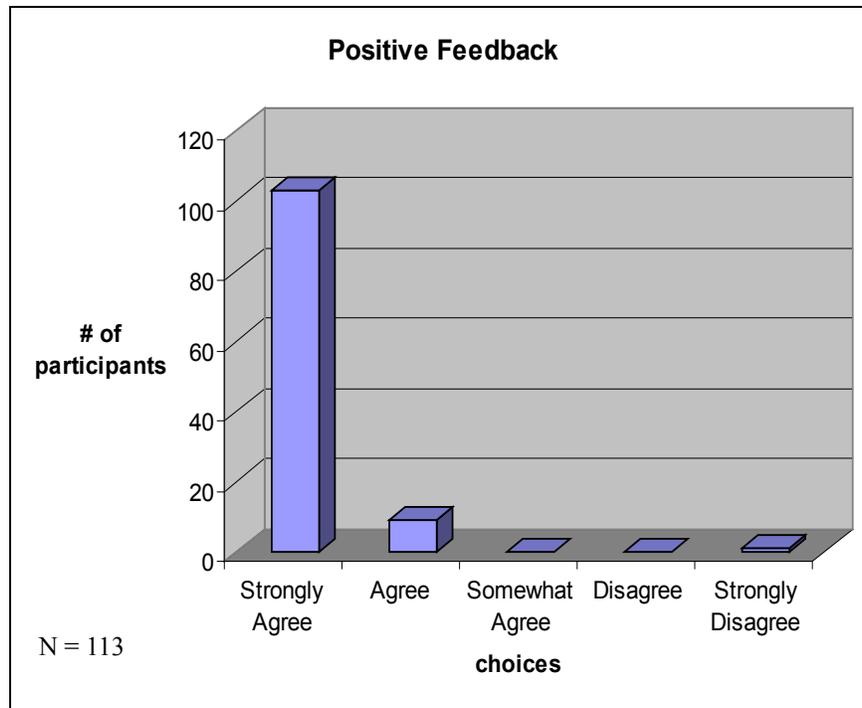
*Trainer Demonstration of Skills:* When asked whether the ARISE trainer demonstrated the necessary skills to teach the ARISE Life-Management Skills program, participants reported an average of 4.81 out of a maximum of 5.00. Eighty-six percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the trainer demonstrated the necessary skills, while an additional 13% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 99% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the skills demonstrated by the trainer.



*Trainer’s Stimulation of Discussion:* When asked whether the ARISE trainer stimulated discussion by asking thought-provoking questions, using relevant examples, and conducting interactive exercises, participants reported an average of 4.79 out of a maximum of 5.00. Eighty-seven percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the trainer stimulated discussion, while an additional 11% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 98% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the discussion stimulated by the trainer.



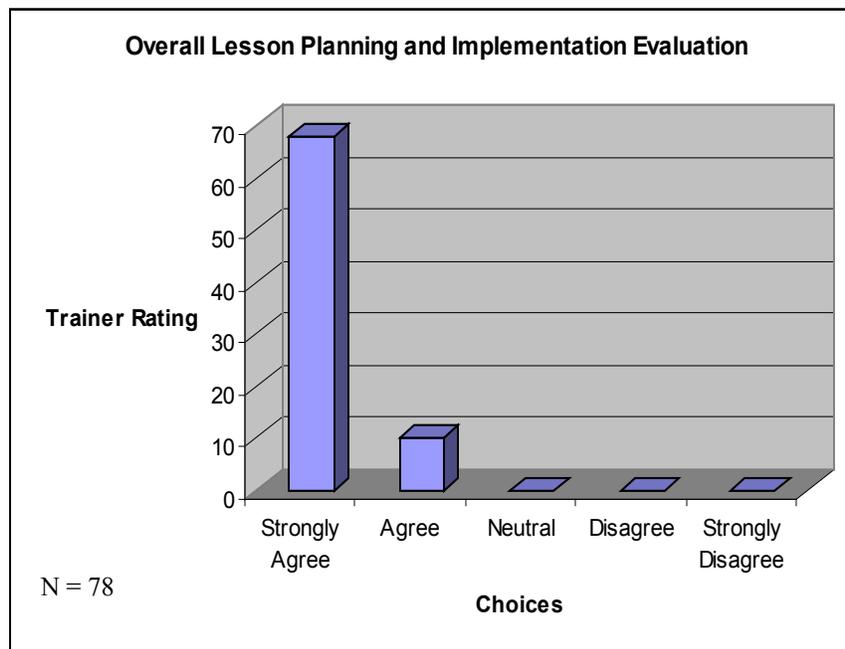
*Positive Feedback:* When asked whether the ARISE trainer provided positive feedback consistently throughout training, participants reported an average of 4.84 out of a maximum of 5.00. Ninety-one percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the trainer consistently provided positive feedback, while an additional 8% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 99% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the positive feedback they received from the trainer.



## Lesson Planning Competency at End of Training

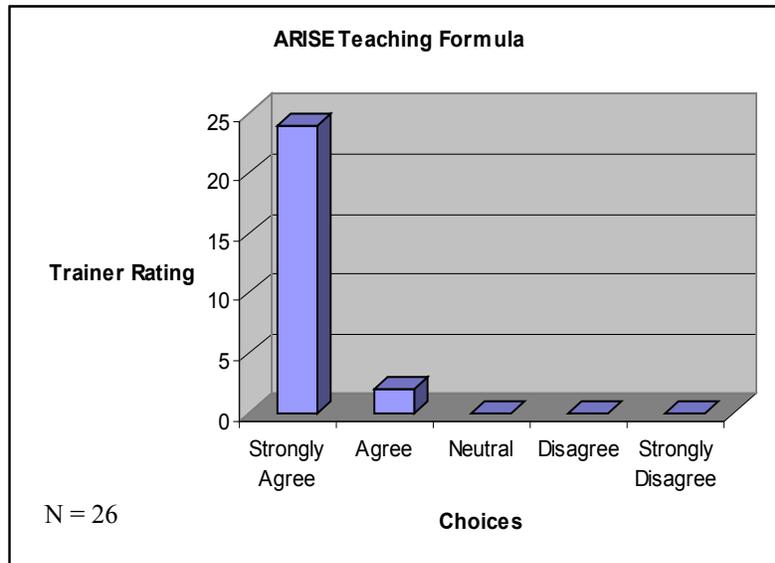
At the end of training, trainees are put into groups to present an ARISE Life-Skills lesson. These lessons are evaluated by the trainer to ensure that participants have properly learned the skills they need as Certified Life-Skills Instructors. It is expected that 75% of the trainees will demonstrate competency in lesson planning and implementation at the completion of training. Twenty-six observations were conducted by the ARISE trainer at three different facilities. The trainees were rated on three different items, with the highest rating of 5 “strongly agree” and the lowest rating of 1 “strongly disagree.”

**Overall Summary:** It was expected that 75% of the instructors observed would demonstrate competency in lesson planning and implementation at the completion of training. The three areas of assessment were combined to determine an overall rating of competency. Overall, 100% of the trainees demonstrated competency by receiving a rating of “strongly agreed” or “agreed” to each area of assessment. The average rating overall was a 4.87 out of a maximum of 5.00. The expectation was exceeded. The Certified Life-Skills Instructors demonstrated a high level of competency in lesson planning at the completion of training.

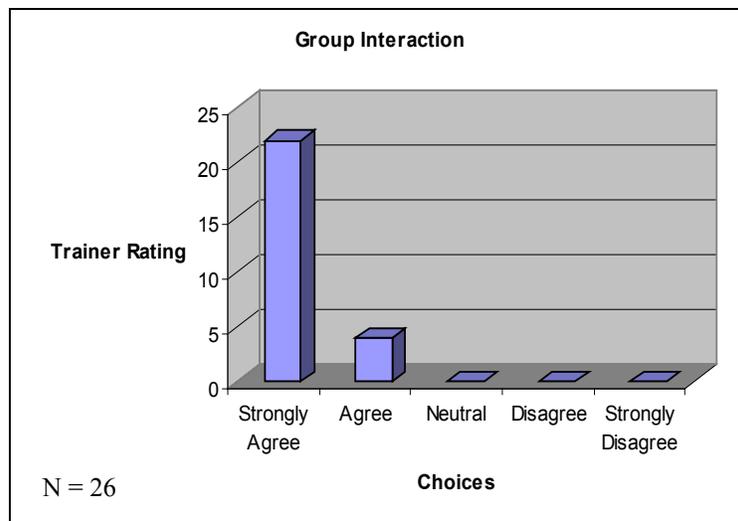


## Results:

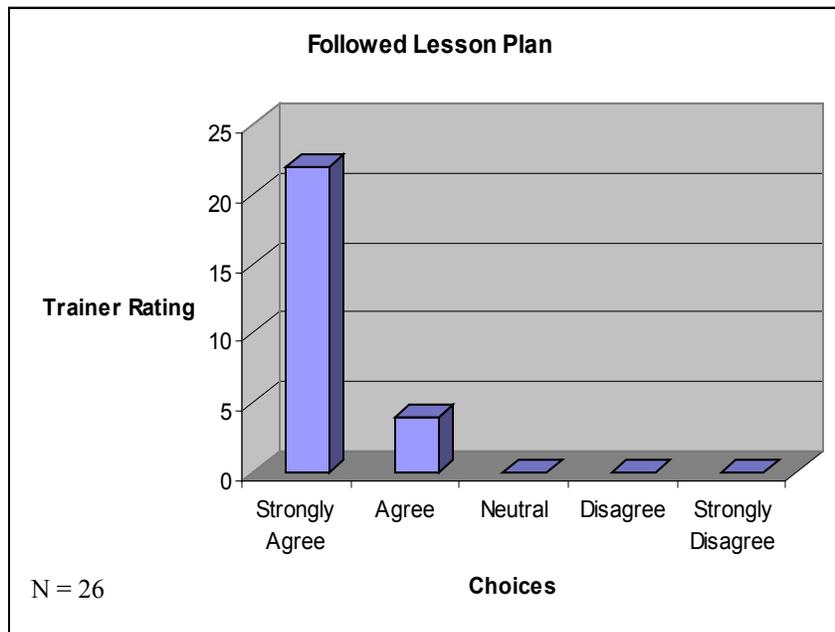
**ARISE Teaching Formula:** First, the trainer rated the trainees on their grasp of the ARISE Teaching Formula. Trainees received an average score of 4.92 out of a possible 5.00 from the trainer. Ninety-two percent of the trainees received the highest rating. Trainees displayed a firm grasp of the ARISE Teaching Formula.



**Group Interaction:** The trainees were also evaluated on the level of group interaction and positive feedback utilized throughout the lesson. Trainees received an average score of 4.85 out of a possible 5.00 from the trainer. Eighty-five percent of the trainees received the highest rating. Trainees exhibited a high level of group interaction and positive feedback.



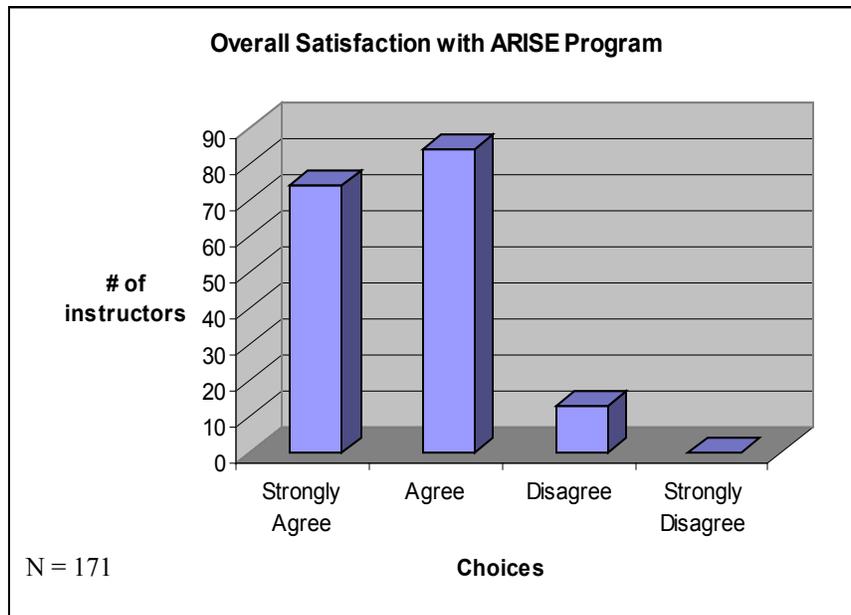
**Followed Lesson Plan:** The trainees were rated on how well the lesson plan was followed. Trainees received an average score of 4.86 out of a possible 5.00 from the trainer. Eighty-five percent of the trainees received the highest rating. Trainees demonstrated the ability to follow the lesson plan provided to them.



## Instructor Survey

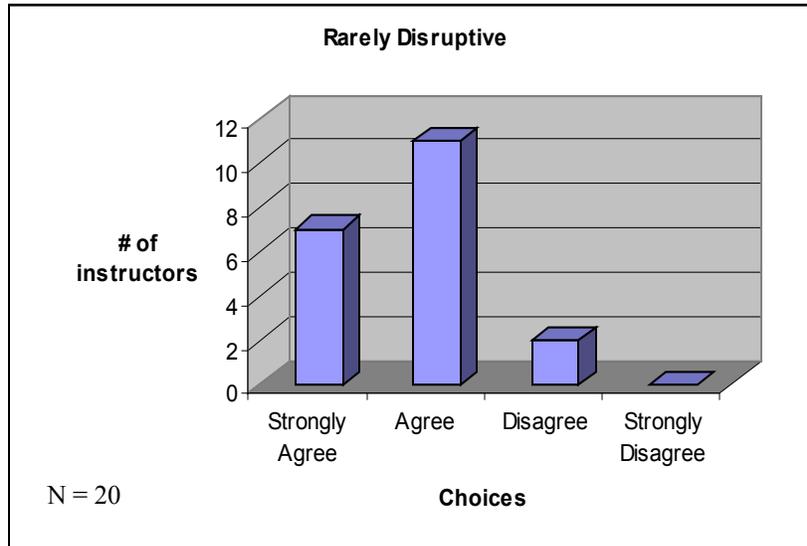
The Instructor Survey was administered to Certified ARISE Life Skill Instructors. This survey was conducted to evaluate the level of satisfaction instructors have with the ARISE Life Skills Program. Instructors were asked to complete nine questions on a Likert scale from 4 “strongly agree” to 1 “strongly disagree.” The instructor surveys were completed by 20 instructors at seven facilities. It is expected that 75% of the instructors will indicate satisfaction with the program.

**Overall Summary:** It was expected that 75% of the instructors would indicate satisfaction with the program, as measured by the instructor survey. The expectation was exceeded. By combining all nine questions on the training evaluation, overall 92% of the instructors expressed satisfaction with the ARISE program as indicated by selected either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” to each question. The average rating overall was a 3.37 out of a maximum of 4.00. The results also indicate an improvement over the previous year. In the 2005-2006 evaluation of instructor satisfaction the same level of satisfaction was achieved only 88% of the time. This displays a 4% increase in level of satisfaction with the ARISE program.

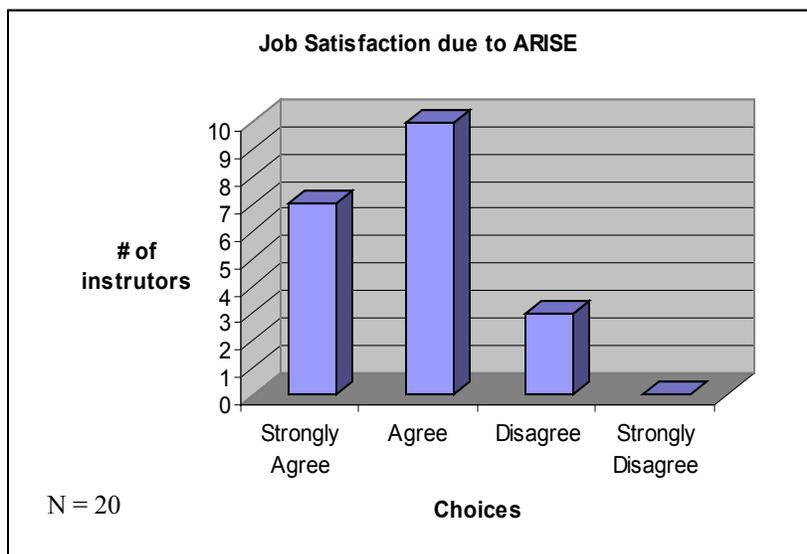


## Results:

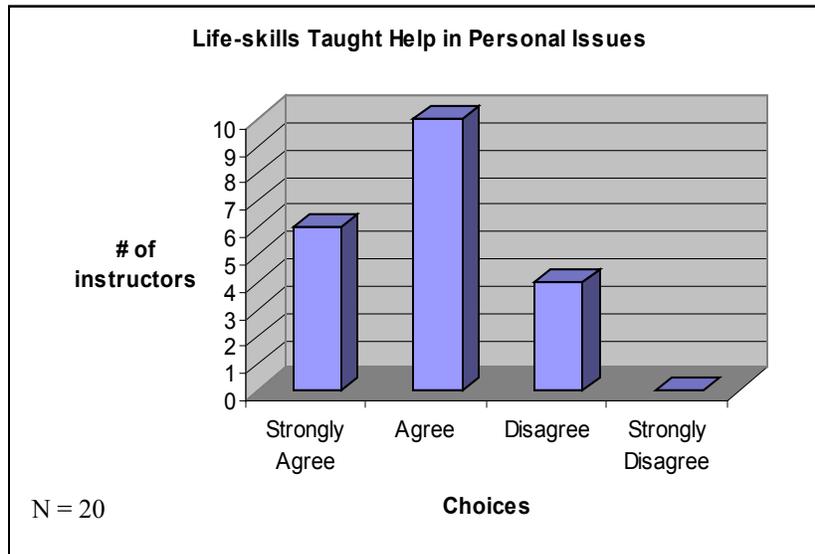
**Disruptive Youth:** Instructors reported that the youth were rarely disruptive during the ARISE groups sessions by endorsing this statement an average of 3.25 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-five percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the youth were rarely disruptive during group session, while an additional 55% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 90% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the youth’s behavior during sessions.



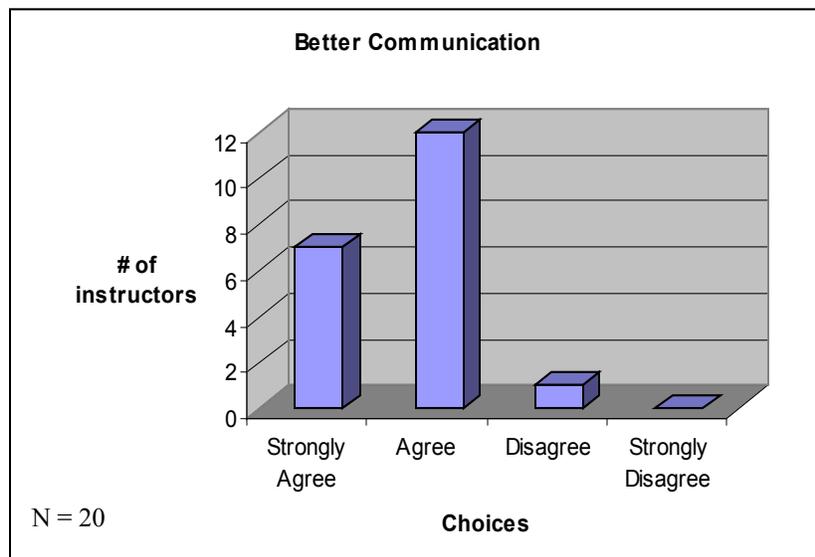
**Job Satisfaction:** When asked whether they had more job satisfaction as a result of teaching the ARISE Life-Management Skills program, instructors reported an average of 3.20 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-five percent of the participants “strongly agreed” they had more job satisfaction from teaching the ARISE program, while an additional 50% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 85% of the instructors strongly agreed or agreed that that they had more job satisfaction since they began teaching the ARISE program to youth.



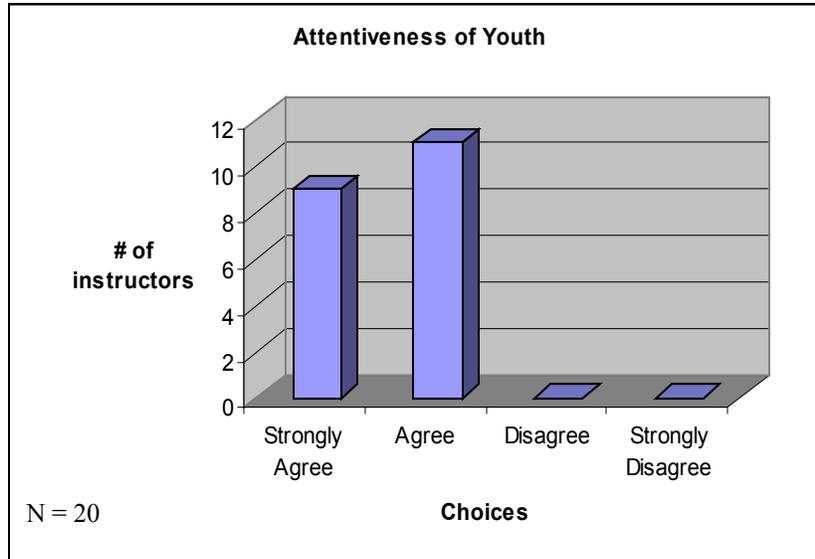
**Personal Issues:** Instructors were also asked whether the ARISE program helped them in dealing with their own personal issues. Thirty percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the life-skills they were teaching were helping them with personal issues, while an additional 50% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 80% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the life-skills they were teaching through the ARISE program were helping in their personal lives. Out of a maximum of 4.00, instructors rated this statement overall an average of 3.10.



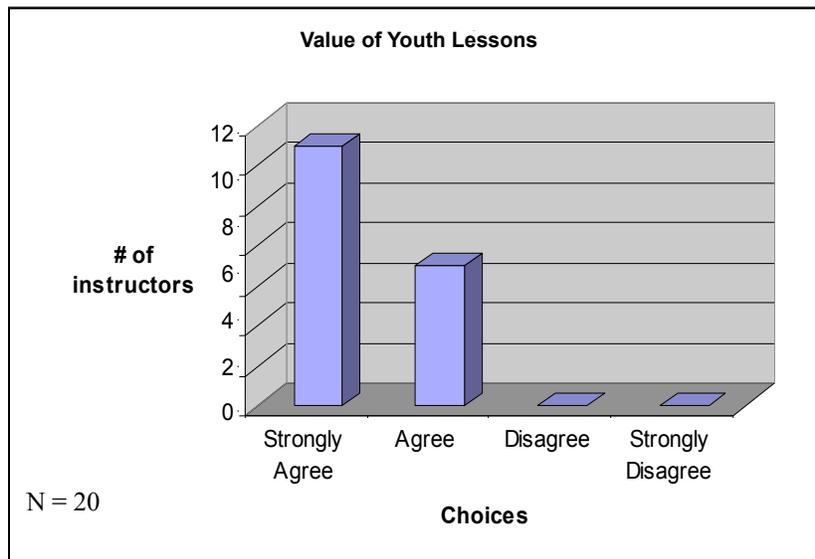
**Communication:** Instructors reported better communication with youth and fellow staff by endorsing this statement an average of 3.30 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-five percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that they are better able to communicate with the youth and other staff since they became an ARISE Life-Skills Instructor, while an additional 60% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 95% of the instructors expressed agreed or strongly agreed that becoming an ARISE instructor has helped their communication at work.



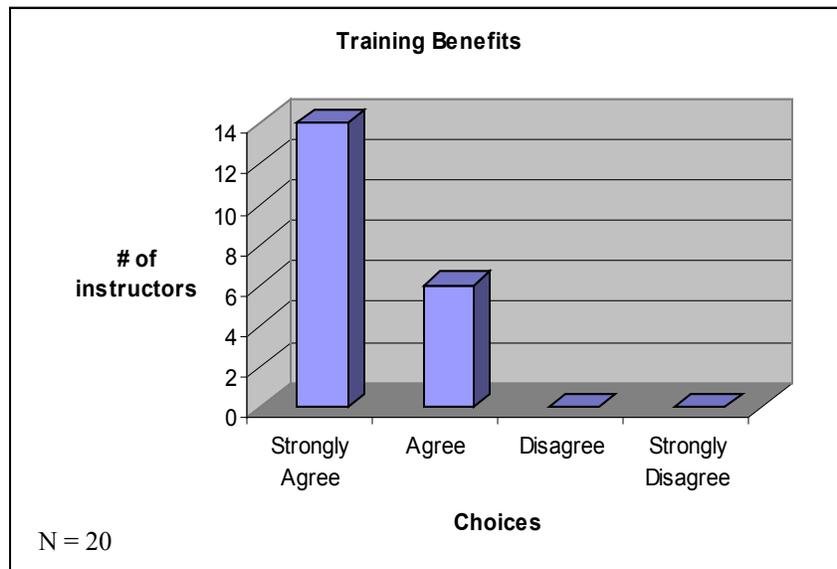
**Attentiveness:** Instructors indicated that the youth were attentive during ARISE lessons by reporting an average of 3.45 out of a maximum of 4.00. Forty-five percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the youth were attentive during ARISE lessons, while an additional 55% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 100% of the instructors agreed or strongly agreed that the youth were attentive in the ARISE lessons.



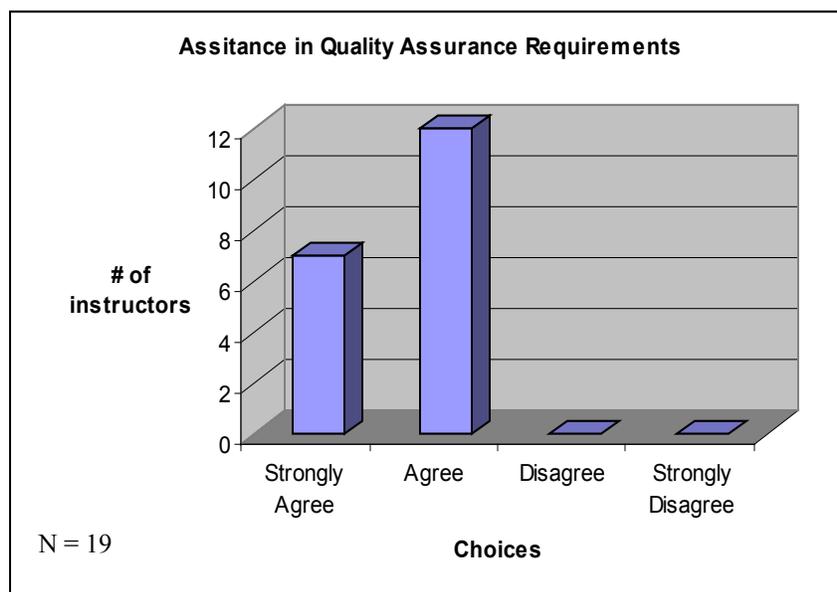
**Value:** When asked whether the ARISE Life-Management Lessons were valuable for the youth at that facility, instructors reported an average of 3.65 out of a maximum of 4.00. Sixty-five percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the lessons were valuable to the youth in their charge, while an additional 35% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 100% of the instructors expressed that the lessons were valuable to the youth.



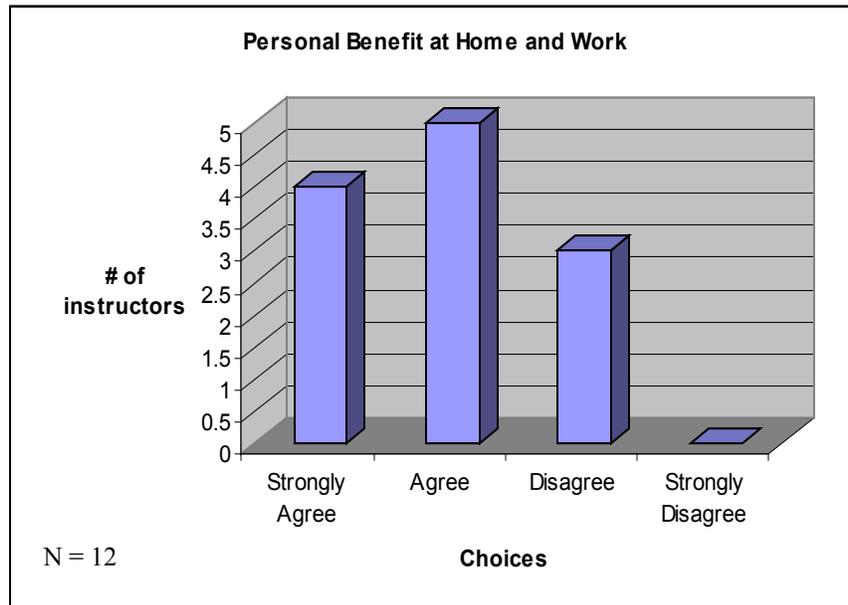
**Training Benefit:** Instructors were also asked whether the staff training was beneficial to them. Instructors indicated that it was. Seventy percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that the training was beneficial, while an additional 30% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 100% of the instructors felt the training was beneficial reporting an average of 3.70 out of a maximum of 4.00



**Quality Assurance:** Instructors were asked to rate whether the ARISE program had assisted the facility in meeting its quality assurance requirements. Instructors responded favorably with an average of 3.39 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-seven percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that ARISE had helped in meeting quality assurance requirements, while an additional 63% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 100% of the participants expressed satisfaction with ARISE’s assistance in meeting quality assurance requirements.



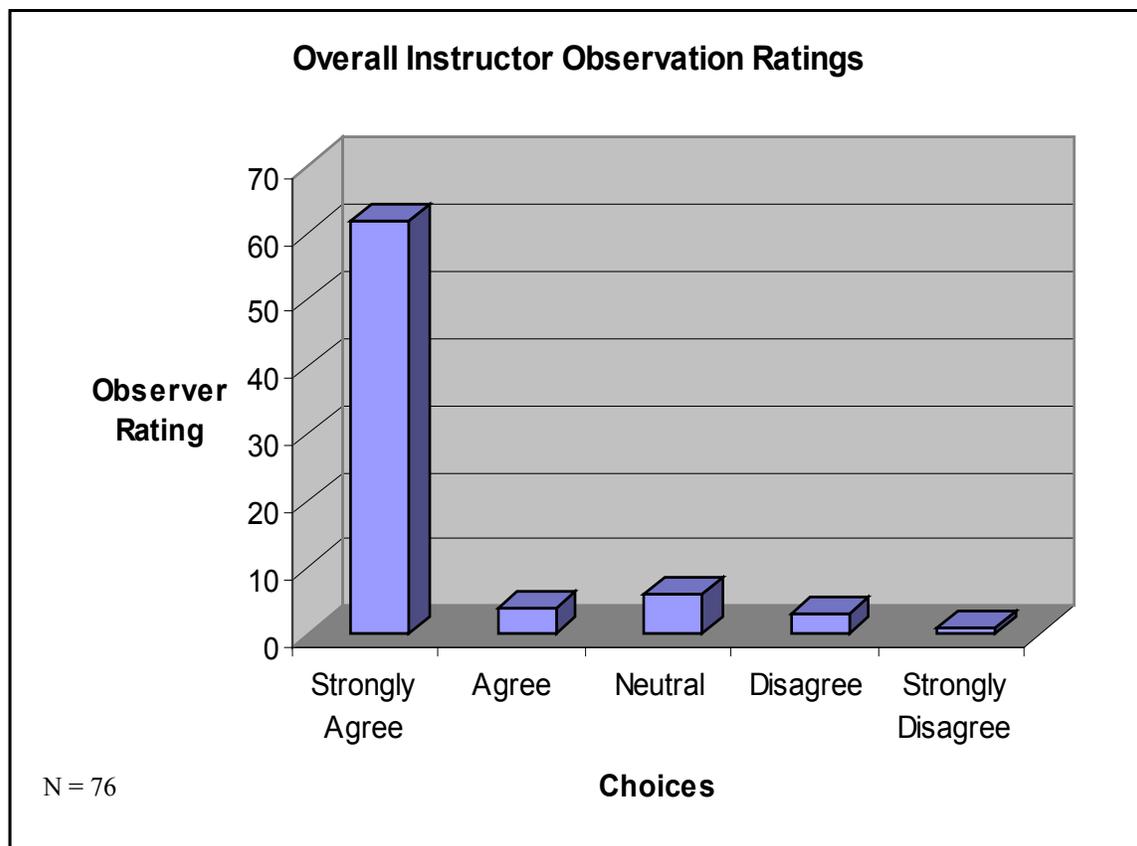
*Personal Benefit:* Last, instructors were asked to rate whether they had personally benefited from the ARISE program at home and at work. Instructors reported an average of 3.08 out of a maximum of 4.00. Thirty-three percent of the participants “strongly agreed” that they had personally benefited from the ARISE program, while an additional 42% reported they “agreed” with that statement. Overall, 75% of the participants expressed that they had personally benefited from the ARISE program at home or at work.



## Instructor Observation Evaluation

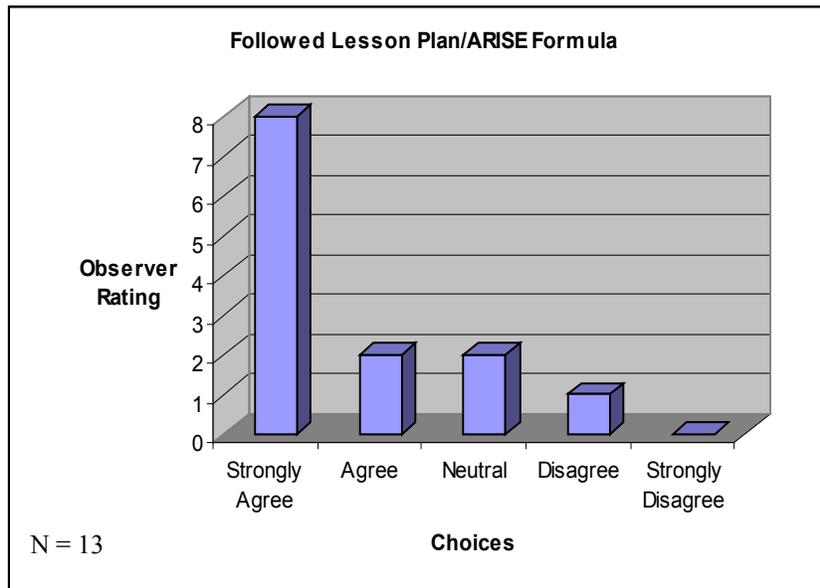
The ARISE staff periodically evaluates Certified Life-Management Skills Instructors by observing the instructors while teaching an ARISE group session. It is expected that 75% of the instructors observed will demonstrate competency in program implementation. Thirteen observations were conducted at six different facilities by a professional ARISE trainer. The instructors were rated on six different items, using a Likert scale from 5 “strongly agree” to 1 “strongly disagree.”

**Overall Summary:** It was expected that 75% of the instructors observed would demonstrate competency in program implementation, as determined by ARISE professional staff observing and evaluating Certified Life-Skills Instructors during an ARISE group. By combining all six questions on the instructor observation evaluation, overall 86% of the instructors demonstrated competency receiving a rating of “strongly agreed” or “agreed” to each question. The average rating overall was a 4.75 out of a maximum of 5.00. The expectation was exceeded. The Certified Life-Skills Instructors are demonstrating a high level of competency in implementing the program.

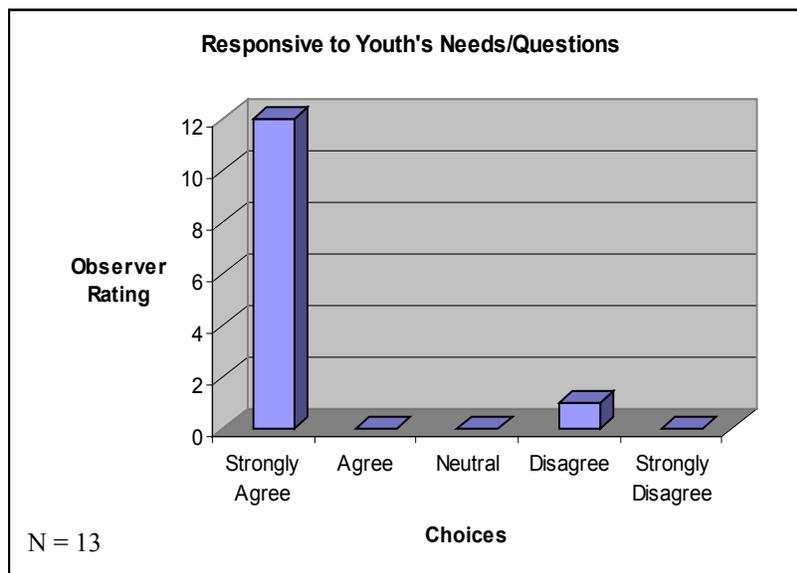


## Results:

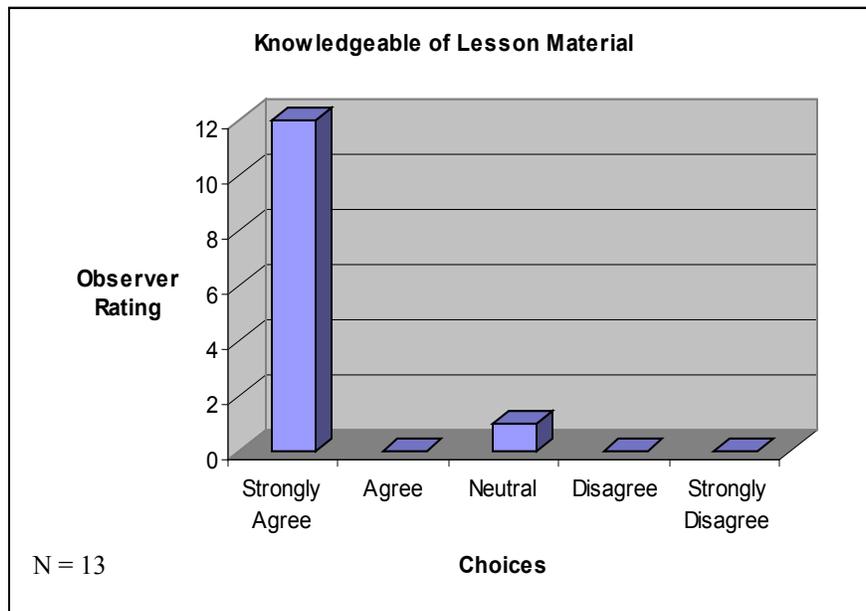
***Followed Lessons Plan/ARISE Formula:*** Certified Instructors were rated on how well they followed the lesson plan provided by the ARISE curriculum, as well as using the ARISE formula when conducting the lessons. Instructors received an average score of 4.31 out of a possible 5.00 from the observer. Seventy-seven percent of the instructors received the rating of “strongly agreed” or “agreed” (62% and 15% respectively). Instructors exceeded expectations in following the lesson plan and using the ARISE formula.



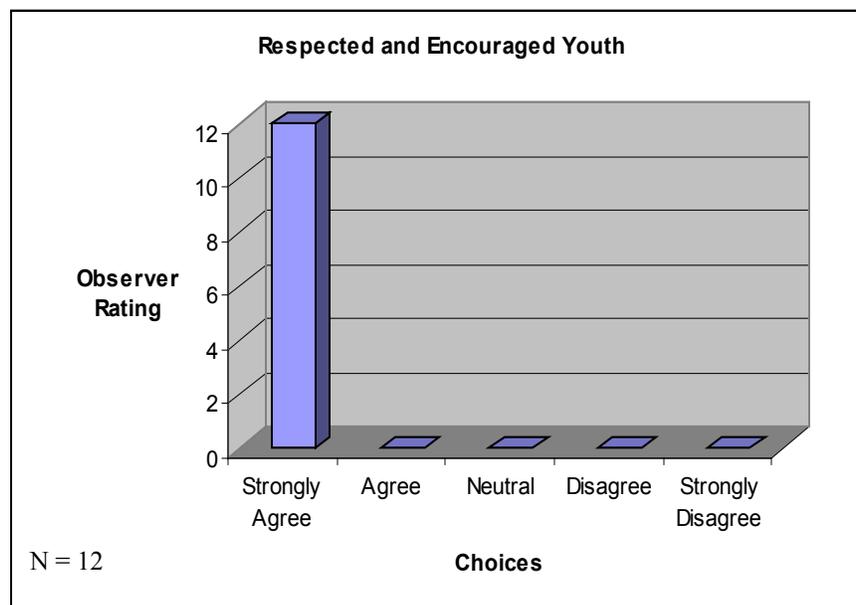
***Responsive to Needs and Questions of Youth:*** Instructors were rated on whether they were responsive to the needs and questions of the youth. Instructors received an average score of 4.77 out of a possible 5.00 from the observer. Ninety-two percent of the instructors received the rating of “strongly agreed.” Instructors exceeded expectations in their responsiveness to the youth.



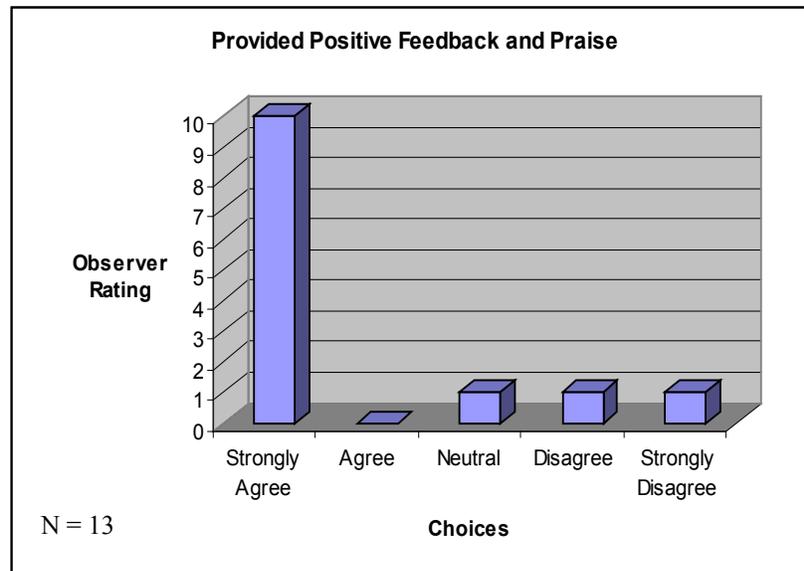
**Knowledgeable of Lesson Material:** Instructors were evaluated on their knowledge of the lesson material. Instructors received an average score of 4.85 out of a possible 5.00 from the observer. Ninety-two percent of the instructors received the rating of “strongly agreed.” Instructors exceeded expectations in their knowledge of the lesson material.



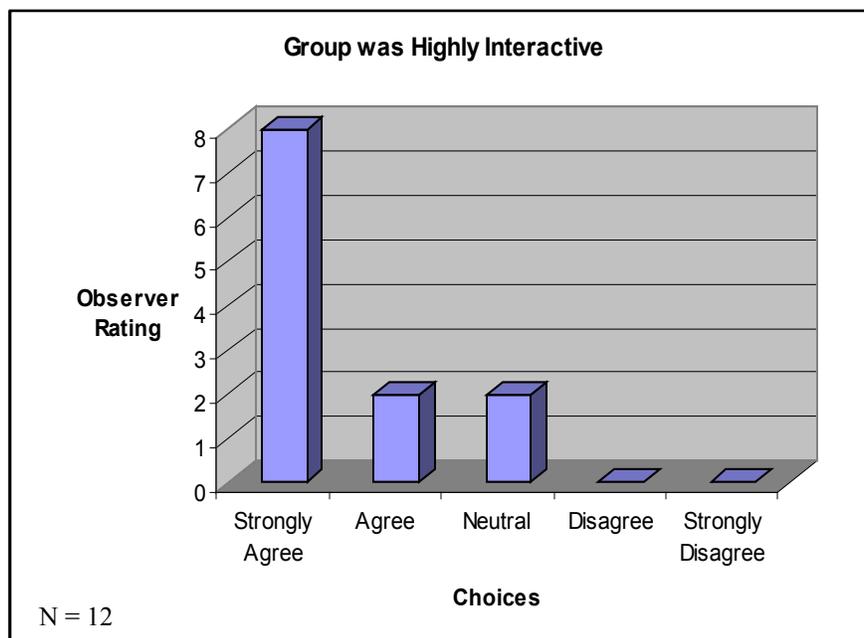
**Respected and Encouraged Youth:** Instructors were rated on whether they treated the learners with respect and encouraged the same behavior from the youth. As rated by the observer, instructors received an average score of 5.00 out of a possible 5.00. Every instructor evaluated received a rating of “strongly agree.” Instructors exceeded expectations in their ability to treat the youth with respect and encourage the youth to behave the same



**Provided Positive Feedback and Praise:** Instructors were evaluated on whether they provided plenty of positive feedback and praise to the youth. The observer rated the instructors an average score of 4.31 out of a possible 5.00. Seventy-seven percent of the instructors received the rating of “strongly agreed.” Instructors exceeded expectations by providing an abundance of positive feedback and praise to the youth.



**Group was Highly Interactive:** Certified Instructors were rated on the level of interaction they maintained during the group lesson. Instructors received an average score of 4.50 out of a possible 5.00 from the observer. Eighty-three percent of the instructors received the rating of “strongly agreed” or “agreed” (67% and 16% respectively). Instructors exceeded expectations by carrying out highly interactive group lessons.



## FOCUS GROUPS

From February 22-23, 2007 focus groups were conducted in the Washington D.C. area to get specific feedback about ARISE from organizations using the program. Four different organizations were questioned about the ARISE program. At each organization both the professional staff teaching the lessons, as well as the youth using the lessons were interviewed. The following includes specifics about each organization and their responses on a variety of questions.

### List of Programs:

**Roosevelt Senior High School:** The program is administered by Tina Miledge, a school psychologist. Her mission is to provide support and listen to students at the senior high. She runs a number of groups for students such as, teen moms, survivors of suicide, peer mediation, grief and healing, and diversity groups, as well as the life-skills program using ARISE. The ARISE lessons are conducted on a weekly basis.

Roosevelt Senior High School  
Tina Miledge  
1301 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20011  
202-541-6449  
Participant since: November 2005

**Trinidad Concerns Citizens for Reform:** This is an after school program for ages 5-12. It is an enrichment program available weekdays and includes children that the program feels “show potential.” The program helps with homework in a fun learning environment. They focus on personal responsibility and choice involved in behavioral responses. They have used ARISE since they started the program and conduct ARISE lessons weekly with the youth, but reinforce the lessons whenever a situation takes place to reconfirm the material. Many of the staff members are young adults and high school students that volunteer.

Trinidad Concerned Citizens for Reform  
Catrise Simpson  
1510 Montello Ave. N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
202-397-1596  
Participant since: May 2004

**Youth Services Center:** This is a juvenile detention center for youth that are currently waiting for hearings or placement in more permanent facilities. They are appointed by the court to be there. The length of stay is supposed to be no longer than 45 days, but youth sometimes stay up to 6 months. There is a high turn over in the youth, so youth are not exposed to the ARISE program for long. The staff sees their role as one that provides direction, guidance, and love to the youth. They help youth by providing good role models and giving positive reinforcement. They try to give them the tools they need to be productive outside the facility.

Youth Rehabilitation Services/Youth Services Center  
Ms. Taylor  
1000 Mt. Olivet  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
202-576-9018  
Participant since: December 2005

**Positive Nature, Inc. :** This is an after school program for children ages 8-18 with special educational needs (academically, behaviorally, or emotionally). The youth are bussed here from various schools in the district. The program is conducted weekdays from 4-6:30 pm. Their program includes Positive Peer Periods, Social Skill Enhancement, Academic Enhancement / Tutoring, Therapeutic Focus Group Sessions / Emotional Awareness, ARISE Life Skills Training, Core Therapeutic Components: Art, Music, Movement, Drama, and Recreation, and Builders Challenge. Their goals for students include social development, educational enhancement, emotional awareness, and autonomy. ARISE was cited as the cornerstone of their program and they have been using it since the program began.

Positive Nature, Inc.  
Jennifer Murphy  
1017 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20012  
202-646-0560  
Participant since: September 2004

### **Focus Groups Summary:**

The focus groups reveal that the ARISE program is a valuable asset to those programs working with it. Staff and youth seem to value and appreciate the program and convey that the lessons are changing the youth in a positive way. The ARISE program is an intricate part of fulfilling the mission at each facility, even though those missions vary by facility. The youth and staff had a variety of things they liked about ARISE.

Staff were very pleased with the composition of the ARISE lessons. **The lessons are structured enough for the instructor to feel comfortable presenting the material, but flexible enough to adapt to any population.** It seemed that programs that have fine tuned the lessons and made them specific to the youth they were working with, were the most positive about the program. It was apparent that the curricula could be used with a variety of youth, including youth with academic and emotional problems as well as those with handicaps such as autism and mild mental retardation.

Staff also gave nothing but positive feedback about the ARISE training. They all viewed it favorably and felt well prepared to teach the lessons. They felt it was entertaining, inspiring, and educational. The only suggestion was to have refresher sessions (re-certification) for those that have already been through the 7-hour training. They suggest a shorter session that would give them new ideas, icebreakers, and a review of the ARISE Formula. They need to be rejuvenated. The staff listed a variety of challenges, but most were program specific and not specific to ARISE.

The staff from Youth Services were the ones that reported they had benefited personally from the ARISE program. They would benefit greatly from the CHOICES training. Staff in other locations felt the lessons were nothing new to them and were a part of their life before ARISE.

Youth seem to maintain the lessons they have learned and listed a variety of lessons as their favorites. Their favorites seemed to depend mostly on what was most relevant to the group in question. With most of the youth, discussion, role playing and drawing were listed as favorite activities. A few youth indicated that they are shy about getting up in front of people. On the whole, the youth and staff both appreciate and enjoy the interactive, engaging activities. Most felt that lessons would be good for family and have shared at least some of what they have learned with others. The youth also value and understand the importance of life-skills in their lives.

In the questions about gangs, the youth and staff often agreed. Themes such as belongingness, alternative positive activities, self-respect/self-esteem, good decision making, and having goals re-occurred throughout the groups.

**Program: Youth Services**

**Date: February 22, 2007 3:30 PM**

**Youth: 4 teenage females and 2 teenage males**

**Staff: 9 female staff members working on the female floor**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- It teaches us useful things to keep us from coming back to a detention facility.
- It teaches us healthy ways to release anger.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- Everyone gets angry, you need to learn how to handle it.
- Don't have to use physical ways to express anger. (others agreed with this statement)
- Can use writing or talking to deal with angry feelings.

What type of activity did you enjoy most (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- They enjoyed group discussion because you can learn from everyone.
- They like to role play because they like to be the center of attention and to be dramatic.
- They just think it is fun.

Is there one lesson or activity that you enjoyed the most?

- When learning about networking, jobs, and money, they did practice interviews and filled out applications.
- They liked the lesson on self-esteem because it taught them how to feel good about themselves without being dependant on others to feel that way.
- They like violence and conflict and learning how to avoid confrontation.

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- The 2 males said they had shared anger management lessons with others.
- One female reported sharing about the interviewing lesson with family that visited.

Why do you think that learning life skills are important?

- Because they are young adults and need to do it on their own without the guidance of adults.
- To say out of trouble
- To make better choices

If you have a little brother/sister, do you think ARISE would be good for him/her.

- Yes, to keep them from making the same mistakes and end up in a detention facility
- Need to learn these things at a younger age to avoid being in detention facilities. There are lots of things going on in the streets and will be able to get their mind off of it.

What one important lesson did you learn by attending an ARISE group?

- Everyone has problems
- Interviewing for jobs
- Anger management

What do you need to help keep you from joining a gang?

- Self respect and self-esteem; if you want to live, you need to stay out of them
- Having goals to motivate you to get from point A to point B

What do you need from family, friends, and neighbors that would help them from joining gangs?

- Support; someone to say they can do this (instead of you can't)
- Love
- Being able to communicate

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- Lack self-respect/self-esteem
- Want to look cool and tough
- Want to fit in somewhere

**Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE lessons?

- The lessons provide structure for building character and morals in the youth.
- The program gets staff and youth interacting with each other.
- Use ARISE to connect day staff with evening staff (do some in the morning and some in the evening)

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE groups?

- As a staff member sometimes I realize where I am lacking and what my own weakness are.
- Sometimes it is hard thinking up additional materials to add into the lessons, if you want to add to them.
- The youth turn over is hard to deal with.

Do you see a difference in your program from before you had ARISE?

- Yes, the major difference being that it gave the staff structure. They were always doing life skills, but with no structure.
- It is fun and the youth leave with a smile. They are happier with the lessons. They have to attend the lesson or stay in their room.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- You leave very enthusiastic about it afterward.
- You feel comfortable doing ARISE.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- Not in the normal training, but would like to have a recertification training that is shorter. They forget things and need a refresher to keep up their energy level.

What topics do the youth respond most to?

- Violence and conflict (spend a lot of time on it)
- Self-esteem

What types of activities do the youth respond most to (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Group discussions (can go on for hours)
- Role playing
- Skits
- Games/ice breakers

Which do they like least?

- Homework assignments

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- Yes, they have specific youth they see a difference in.

How has the relationship between the youth changed since you have been utilizing the ARISE program?

- The lessons bring out issues between the youth that can be worked out.
- The lessons bring out personal issues youth can release and learn what they need to work on.

How has ARISE improved your life at work? Have you been able to apply any of the lessons you are teaching to your own work here? How so?

- The lessons help us deal with each other.
- The lessons help us keep control.
- The lessons can benefit adults and children; we all need to control anger and deal with problems. The lessons go with us wherever you go.

How satisfied are you in your job? Have the skills you have learned through ARISE increased your job satisfaction? How so?

- We are confident in the job and ARISE helps with that.

How has ARISE improved your life at home? Do you use any of the lessons you are teaching helped you in your life outside work? How so?

- Yes, it is used with teenagers at home
- Yes, it helps control anger.

What do you think youth need to help keep them from joining a gang?

- Love
- Attention
- Structure in life (school and after school)
- Concerned and involved parents

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- They do not have love, attention, structure in their lives, or concerned/involved parents.
- They do not go to school.
- They have low self-esteem.
- They need to belong. They feel like no one loves them and the gangs fill that void for them.

**Program: Positive Nature, Inc.**

**Date: February 22, 2007 5:00 PM**

**Youth: 6 middle school age boys**

**Staff: 3 staff members (the female director and 2 male staff members)**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- We get to say positive things about people.
- We like working together.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- You should let it go.
- You need to calm yourself (count to ten).
- You should walk away.
- You should ignore people that make you angry/walk away.

What type of activity did you enjoy most (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Art/drawing
- Puppets
- Role playing

Is there one lesson or activity that you enjoyed the most?

- bullying

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- Yes, parents, brothers, and sisters
- We shared anger and bullying.

Why do you think that learning life skills are important?

- You learn how to treat others so they treat you the same back.
- You learn how to deal with other people.

If you have a little brother/sister, do you think ARISE would be good for him/her.

- Yes

What one important lesson did you learn by attending an ARISE group?

- Bullying
- Conflict
- Respect

What do you need to help keep you from joining a gang?

- Knowing what to say to the gang when the gang asks them to join
- Tell police or adults when gangs talk to you
- Learning how to be a role model for younger brothers and sisters

What do you need from family, friends, and neighbors that would help them from joining gangs?

- Love and support

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- They think crime is fun.

### **Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE lessons?

- The lessons reflect the issues kids are dealing with like bullying.
- The lessons give a blueprint to go by for issues.
- The lessons give you a nice introduction and then reinforce with engaging activities.
- It is “whole body” learning.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE groups?

- For youth it is spelling and grammar; they get too caught up in it
- They have tweaked the lessons to accommodate the urban and special needs of their students.
- Behavior management in the groups is a big issue; handling the kids in the group, but this is not because of ARISE.
- Sometime it is hard to get them to branch out in their thinking. They get stuck.
- They have trouble motivating them to do some of the activities such as role playing because they do not like to get up in front of the group.

Do you see a difference in your program from before you had ARISE?

- Hard to say because we have always had it. It is the cornerstone of our program.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- They felt like “A” student; felt encouraged.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- Could be written more specifically for special populations, although they know that is not possible.

What topics do the youth respond most to?

- Bullying
- Anger management
- Conflict

What types of activities do the youth respond most to (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Mind mapping
- Working in pairs
- Group discussion

Which do they like least?

- Role playing; hard to get them up and participating
- Writing anything; feels like homework and have anxiety about it

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- They have started to learn warning signs in others and back off the situation.
- They have strategies to cool their anger.
- They are able to integrate and reinforce the program throughout the day; not just in lessons.

How has the relationship between the youth changed since you have been utilizing the ARISE program?

- Using since the start of the program, so it is hard to say.
- It gives them a common ground as a group to connect to each other.

How has ARISE improved your life at work? Have you been able to apply any of the lessons you are teaching to your own work here? How so?

- They are useful for everyday life.
- They lessons are things we already know.

How satisfied are you in your job? Have the skills you have learned through ARISE increased your job satisfaction? How so?

- ARISE is the most common part of the day. It is a big part of the job and they do enjoy doing them.

How has ARISE improved your life at home? Do you use any of the lessons you are teaching helped you in your life outside work? How so?

- Most of the lessons are common sense to them or use it so often they don't think about it.

What do you think youth need to help keep them from joining a gang?

- Feeling values
- Positive people in their life
- Support
- Structured activities
- Points of engagement

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- Lack a sense of belonging
- Lack of outward care

**Program: Roosevelt Senior High**

**Date: February 23, 2007 9:00 AM**

**Youth: One 12<sup>th</sup> grade female and two 10<sup>th</sup> grade boys**

**Staff: 1 female school psychologist**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- They like the books and the information in them.
- They like the ability to share how they feel.
- They like the activities.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- How to deal with being picked on (walking away, deep breathing, counting to 10)
- Draw to calm down
- Talking to family and friends
- Don't pay attention to the feelings/ignore them

What type of activity did you enjoy most (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Drawing your feelings
- Before/after pictures
- Drawing
- Discussion and talking to adults

Is there one lesson or activity that you enjoyed the most?

- All of the activities are different, yet on the same topic.
- Do many activities, so not one in particular

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- Some said no, others said with parents

Why do you think that learning life skills are important?

- When they leave school it will help them deal with others.

If you have a little brother/sister, do you think ARISE would be good for him/her.

- Everyone can benefit from emotional control and being prepared for life.
- Have friends that have benefited from the program

What one important lesson did you learn by attending an ARISE group?

- To find outlets for anger and not let it bottle up
- Control anger as soon as possible
- Control anger before it gets worse

What do you need to help keep you from joining a gang?

- Value education
- Having life goals/setting goals for self
- Think of future both in and out of a gang
- Good peers

What do you need from family, friends, and neighbors that would help them from joining gangs?

- Support; remind you of what you need to do and encourage you

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- They are lonely
- Want to be cool and popular
- For the wrong reasons
- Not supported at home
- For attention

### **Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE lessons?

- The lessons allow for free expression through the activities. They also stress that spelling and grammar do not matter and that not all of us are artists.
- The lessons are user friendly and can be used on many populations (autistic, low reading levels). Tina Milledge (school psychologist) has used the program with autistic students that really express themselves through art and other activities, although they really cannot express themselves well in words.
- There is a clear outline for each lesson to follow, but the lessons are flexible enough to add your own style and adapt in a way that fit the population you are working with at the time.

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE groups?

- There are no real challenges with the program. You do have to know who you are dealing with and present it in a way they will respond to; make it work for each group and make it meaningful to them.

Do you see a difference in your program from before you had ARISE?

- She no longer has to hunt for materials, so she has the energy to work with them. Otherwise she would have to do it. She has many materials and can pull them out when needed (dropping out, anger, self-esteem, etc.). The staff loves Taneka's Tales.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- She did not fall asleep like in most workshops. It was interactive and got to know each other. Not a minute of the training was boring and felt comfortable enough in the group to get up in front of the group and not be embarrassed.
- ARISE has provided support ever since training. Judy (D.C. Trainer) helps her with anything she needs. Judy gives support and calls and checks in with the program.

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- Nothing should be changed. Judy does an excellent job.
- She wants the program to become an intricate part of the school system; just like English. ARISE should be used as a prevention tool.

What topics do the youth respond most to?

- Anger masks

What types of activities do the youth respond most to (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- They love and skits and drawing.

Which do they like least?

- The reading is sometimes hard for them.
- She noted that the reading should be continuously updated to reflect people in the pop culture.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- She has seen them use it. She seems them count to 10 and walk away.

How has the relationship between the youth changed since you have been utilizing the ARISE program?

- ARISE creates positive interactions among students and with staff. Youth do not often like to listen to adults or peers, but do during ARISE lessons. The lessons also encourage respect for other people and diverse people.

How has ARISE improved your life at work? Have you been able to apply any of the lessons you are teaching to your own work here? How so?

- The program gives structure and provides topic and materials that I do not have to put energy into searching for. Leave her with energy for other things.
- Helps her be a better role model for the youth.

How satisfied are you in your job? Have the skills you have learned through ARISE increased your job satisfaction? How so?

- She looks like a hero to the youth because they love the lessons and have fun, but she didn't create it.

How has ARISE improved your life at home? Do you use any of the lessons you are teaching helped you in your life outside work? How so?

- She uses the material intuitively.
- It serves as a review of what she should be doing in life.

What do you think youth need to help keep them from joining a gang?

- Belonging
- Feeling like they are understood (ARISE helps with that)

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- Want to belong
- Absent parents

**Program: Youth Services**

**Date: February 23, 2007 3:00 PM**

**Youth: 11 teenage males (only 2 youth had been there more than 2 weeks & received ARISE lessons)**

**Staff: 2 male staff members that work on all male floor**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- Hygiene
- Jobs

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- Haven't done anger management yet

What type of activity did you enjoy most (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Group discussion
- Role playing

Is there one lesson or activity that you enjoyed the most?

- Resume writing

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- No, no chance while in the facility.

Why do you think that learning life skills are important? (all answered)

- Reduce recidivism
- Prepares them for the future
- Helps them learn how to make a good life for themselves.

If you have a little brother/sister, do you think ARISE would be good for him/her.

- Yes

What one important lesson did you learn by attending an ARISE group?

- Same as the ones they liked; hygiene and jobs.

What do you need to help keep you from joining a gang? (all answered the remaining questions)

- Being involved in activities
- Thinking before acting
- Surrounding self with the right kind of friends
- Staying in school
- Doing community service

What do you need from family, friends, and neighbors that would help them from joining gangs?

- Support
- Love
- Spending time with family

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- To fit in
- To be popular
- To earn respect
- To be protected
- To show you are tough
- To get a reputation

**Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE lessons?

- Can constantly use it throughout the day as issues come up
- Like the curriculum; topics are interesting and relevant

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE groups?

- They are challenged by the youth about their expertise on the topics.

Do you see a difference in your program from before you had ARISE?

- The facility has a lot more structure now. The youth use to play cards and have a lot of free time. Now they have structured groups in the ARISE lessons.

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- Felt they were well prepared to teach the lessons.
- Felt they had something to share with the residents and fellow staff
- Learned a lot from the training
- “Loved it”

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- Would like to see more Florida people; they want a team of support

What topics do the youth respond most to?

- Schooling/dropping out; they have conversations about this a lot
- Conflict resolution
- Realty based topics they have seen or dealt with daily

What types of activities do the youth respond most to (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- They like discussion
- The especially like role playing and skits.
- They also like to draw

Which do they like least?

- No problems with any of the lessons
- Overall, they like the writing the least, but still not a problem because some express themselves verbally and others do not, so the writing helps those non-verbal residents express what they want.
- One instructor stated he rarely uses the writing assignments because he personally likes to be verbal.

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- Have not done anger management yet

How has the relationship between the youth changed since you have been utilizing the ARISE program?

- They are learning to deal with others.
- The lessons keep the facility more organized and structures and therefore the resident are less bored. They have less free time which keeps them out of trouble.
- A lot of the residents return to the facility because it gives them focus and they feel safe there. ARISE is part of that.

How has ARISE improved your life at work? Have you been able to apply any of the lessons you are teaching to your own work here? How so?

- They do not have the problems they use to have.
- The residents trust the staff more and the staff is more comfortable with the youth.
- There is no longer a “boxing match” between the youth and staff.

How satisfied are you in your job? Have the skills you have learned through ARISE increased your job satisfaction? How so?

- The program enlightened awareness of the sensitivity of the residents.
- The program has given us other options in dealing with them.

How has ARISE improved your life at home? Do you use any of the lessons you are teaching helped you in your life outside work? How so?

- Yes, helps with children at home.

What do you think youth need to help keep them from joining a gang?

- Need to trust self and not follow others
- Need structure and other assessable alternatives to gangs to choose from (staff tries to help them with that); basketball, reading, activities
- Need a desire to finish high school and go to college

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- Lack of self-worth
- Lack of connection with others
- Lack of love and attention at home

**Program: Trinidad Concerned Citizens**

**Date: February 23, 2007 4:00 PM**

**Youth: 12 youth (6 males & 6 females) ages 5-12 years**

**Staff: 2 staff members (1 male and 1 female)**

**Youth Questions:**

What do you like most about the ARISE program?

- The book teaches honesty.
- The program makes you smart.
- The program teaches you to make good choices.
- The lessons teach you safety.

What did you learn about how to deal with angry feelings?

- You are responsible for yourself and need to control anger
- Keep your voice down
- Relax and make sure anger does not come out

What type of activity did you enjoy most (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Games
- Drawing/coloring
- Activities
- Puzzles
- Discussing/sharing

Is there one lesson or activity that you enjoyed the most?

- All of them
- Making good choices

Have you shared what you learned with your friends and family?

- Many said yes (if not all)

Why do you think that learning life skills are important?

- Need them to grow up to be healthy
- They get you somewhere in life
- May come in handy
- “Because we want to have bright and prosperous futures”

If you have a little brother/sister, do you think ARISE would be good for him/her.

- Yes, they would like them too.
- The lessons teach them to make good choices and control him/herself and not to fight.

What one important lesson did you learn by attending an ARISE group?

- Not to drink beer or liquor
- Making good choices
- Being responsible for self

What do you need to help keep you from joining a gang?

- Don't be a follower
- Don't do bad things like they do
- Don't do drugs
- Make good choices

What do you need from family, friends, and neighbors that would help them from joining gangs?

- Send you to school
- Encourage education
- After school programs like this one

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

- They are scared
- To look cool/tough
- Because gangs seem fun at first
- Looking for a family
- They want to be friends with people in the gangs
- They dropped out of school
- They think the gang is their family

### **Staff Questions:**

What do you like about the ARISE lessons?

- That it creates such positive interaction between the youth
- Used the 4/5 series on kids during the summer that were as old as 9<sup>th</sup> grade; the lessons were simple, but still worked. Also use 4/5 series with younger kids. It works well!

What do you find most challenging about the ARISE groups?

- They found the specific lesson on alcohol hard because kids were not familiar with the vocabulary involved
- Lessons need more on being responsible for yourself

Do you see a difference in your program from before you had ARISE?

- Has always been a part of the program, so it is hard to know

How well do you feel the ARISE training prepared you to teach?

- Had a good time in the training
- Trainer could draw people out and make them comfortable; got rid of nerves and shyness
- Had a lot of fun and learned a lot

Is there anything different that ARISE should do in training?

- No

What topics do the youth respond most to?

- The instructors like the lessons on making good choices and mediation and compromise.

What types of activities do the youth respond most to (role playing, group discussion, etc.)?

- Role playing
- Discussion
- Drawing

Which do they like least?

- Don't always like the writing

Are there any situations where ARISE has helped youth deal with their anger in a more positive way?

- Compromise and mediation is always being reinforced; any time anger is displayed during the day, they go over it again

How has the relationship between the youth changed since you have been utilizing the ARISE program?

- Have always done it, so nothing to compare

How has ARISE improved your life at work? Have you been able to apply any of the lessons you are teaching to your own work here? How so?

- It gives you the ideas that work with and the structured activities to do; makes it easier

How satisfied are you in your job? Have the skills you have learned through ARISE increased your job satisfaction? How so?

- Not applicable, because they already know these things.

How has ARISE improved your life at home? Do you use any of the lessons you are teaching helped you in your life outside work? How so?

- Grown to have more patience, especially with children

What do you think youth need to help keep them from joining a gang?

- Staying active in something positive
- Volunteering
- Letting them know the outcomes of the choices they have; jail/death vs. prosperity/happiness

Why do you think kids would join a gang?

They have no one to look up to or be a role model for them.