Advising Inside and Outside:

Engaging and Empowering Students in prison

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Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world

Nelson Mandela, 2012
Learning Outcomes

Examine role of advisors in serving marginalized populations

Explore ‘Strengths Based Advising’

Devise a plan for utilizing a strengths-based advising method in your community
Why did you pursue higher education?
Why are you pursuing higher education? (responses from students)

....because education leads to options, which equates to personal power.

... because I want to have the best opportunities

... I need an education to get the job I desire

.... Because I wanted more for myself, my family and my community

... to gain knowledge that I can use for my future
Why did you choose to become an advisor?
I chose to be an advisor.

...everyone has a right to education, regardless of identity, socioeconomic status, or circumstance.
Education empowers individuals who are disenfranchised by taking control over their own learning and developing a deeper understanding of one’s own position within a community through active participation and engagement.

UWB freshman class ...

• 41% first-generation
• 59% of all students received grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study awards.
• % first-generation
• ~100% of all students Pell eligible (low income)
America’s 2.3 million incarcerated people are predominantly poor and come disproportionately from communities of color; the vast majority are undereducated.
Higher Education Act of 1965
Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994
Second chance Pell Pilot program
2015
Why Prison Education?
Prisoners who participate in prison education programs have 43% lower odds of returning to prison than inmates who do not.

Source: The Vera Institute of Justice
Recidivism and College-in-Prison

- No College: 60%
- Some College: 13.7%
- Bachelors: 5.6%
- Masters: 0%
How do you increase students’ empowerment in your advising practice?
Introduction to Strengths-Based Advising

This approach enables advisors to identify and build on the inherent talents students bring with them into the college and university setting, teaching students to develop and apply their strengths to new and challenging learning tasks.

Strengths-Based Advising

Focuses on:
• Recognizing strengths
• Possibilities
• Emphasizes talents, abilities, strengths
• Open-ended questions

Rather than:
• Looking at problems
• Risk factors
• Focus on lack of skills or talent (poor math skills, etc.)
• Problem-focus questions

Laurie A. Schreiner and Edward “Chip” Anderson (2005)
Steps to using a strengths based advising approach,

• Step 1: Identify Students’ Talents
• Step 2: Affirm Students’ Talents
• Step 3: Envision the Future
• Step 4: Plan Specific Steps for Students to Reach Goals
• Step 5: Apply Students’ Strengths to Challenges
Step 1: Identify Students’ Talents

- What did you learn with the greatest ease in high school?

- What subjects do you enjoy studying the most?

- What kind of environment and what kind of people tend to bring out the best in you?
Step 2: Affirm Students’ Talents and Increase Awareness of Strengths

• Which of your strengths do you feel you rely on most to be successful?

• Which of your strengths do you think will be most useful to you in succeeding in college?
Step 3: Envision the Future

• What are you most looking forward to while in college?

• Imagine yourself graduating from college. What do you see yourself doing as a result of being a college graduate?

• Where do you want to be five years from now?
How students experience strengths based advising:
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To summarize

How do you empower students who are from marginalized populations?

How will you incorporate ‘Strengths Based Advising’ in your advising practice?
Questions?
Comments?
References:


