The Readiness Project: Naming What Matters & Mapping Solutions to Readiness

Sparkaction.org/readiness
 Too many young people lack the abilities they need to meet life’s demands. We can fix this.

**READINESS**

**SHOULD BE A RIGHT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE**

Learn more.
The Readiness Abilities and Practices are easy-to-understand snapshots of what young people must be able to do in order to meet life’s responsibilities, and the (adult and system) practices that foster this readiness.

They reflect **best science and thinking** on what matters most for young people’s wellness and readiness.
The Readiness Abilities

The Readiness Abilities enable young people to take on life's challenges and opportunities. To develop and exercise these readiness abilities, youth need different combinations of skills and mindsets. Below are descriptions of the readiness abilities and skillsets:

### The Readiness Abilities

- **I Can Think & Create**: View the world as a learning and developing environment.
- **I Can Feel & Express Emotion**: Express emotions in a way that helps others understand.
- **I Can Get & Stay Healthy**: Physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- **I Can Apply Learning**: In the real world, apply what you learn.
- **I Can Use Insights to Grow & Develop**: Use insights from life, work, and personal experiences.
- **I Can Work & Stay Focused**: In all areas of life.
- **I Can Solve Problems & Make Decisions**: Analyze problems and make meaningful decisions.
- **I Can Relate to Others & the World**: Form positive relationships and understand the world.
- **I Can Engage with People & Places**: Be interested in and engage with the world.

### The Readiness Skillsets & Mindsets

- **Basic Life Management**: Use critical thinking and basic life skills.
- **Problem Solving & Decision Making**: Use critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- **Emotional Resilience**: Use emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills.
- **Communication**: Communicate effectively and listen actively.
- **Resource Management**: Manage resources effectively and efficiently.

### Mindsets

- **Open-Minded**: Open to new ideas and perspectives.
- **Curious**: Always learning and exploring.
- **Adaptable**: Able to adapt to change and new situations.
- **Self-Directed**: Self-motivated and self-directed.
- **Empathetic**: Able to understand and relate to others.
- **Optimistic**: Able to see the positive side of situations.
- **Growth Mindset**: Able to grow and learn from challenges.
- **Resilient**: Able to bounce back from adversity.

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**THE READINESS ABILITIES**

**I CAN THINK & CREATE**
in ways that help me to navigate and experience life.

**I CAN FEEL & EXPRESS EMOTION**
appropriately and as a way to connect with others.

**I CAN GET & STAY HEALTHY**
physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

**I CAN APPLY LEARNING**
in the real world and to meet life demands.

**I CAN USE INSIGHTS TO GROW & DEVELOP**
in each stage of life.

**I CAN WORK & STAY FOCUSED**
in each area of life.

**I CAN RELATE TO OTHERS & THE WORLD**
by forming, managing and sustaining my relationships.

**I CAN ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE & PLACES**
by being present and engaging in meaningful, real and honest ways.

**I CAN PERSIST THROUGH STRUGGLES & MAINTAIN HOPE**
no matter my challenges.

**I CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS & MAKE DECISIONS**
about the intellectual, social, moral and emotional issues and problems that I face.
THE READINESS SKILLSETS & MINDSETS

The Readiness Abilities enable young people to take on life’s challenges and opportunities. To develop and express these readiness abilities, youth use different combinations of skillsets and mindsets (attitudes, dispositions, habits).

**SKILLSETS**

**BASIC LIFE MANAGEMENT**
I can meet basic life demands and practical needs.

**PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING**
I can solve problems and make informed decisions.

**COPING**
I can make it through and bounce back from hard times.

**ORGANIZATION & PLANNING**
I can organize and plan my life, projects, tasks and schedule.

**APPLICATION**
I can apply what I have learned in practice and real life.

**RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**
I can form, grow, manage and keep my relationships with people.

**COMMUNICATION**
I can communicate what I want to say in an appropriate and effective way.

**RESOURCE & INFORMATION PROCESSING**
I can gather, keep track of and manage information and resources.

**THINKING & ANALYSIS**
I can think and reason clearly and logically.

**MINDSETS**

**HUMBLE**
I am thoughtful and honest about my talents and achievements or shortcomings and mistakes; I have a healthy perspective and engage with others even at times when the focus is not on me.

**FAIR**
I am sensitive to the difference between what is right and wrong and I believe that everyone deserves a fair chance.

**DRIVEN**
I am motivated and focused. I like the feeling of getting things done and accomplishing my goals.

**AGILE**
I am able to change my mood and behaviors depending on what is needed, where I am and who I am with.

**FUTURE ORIENTED**
I am focused on what is ahead and that motivates me to get through the present.

**OPEN-MINDED**
I am open to perspectives and experiences that are different than my own.

**EMPATHETIC**
I am understanding and connected to the feelings or experiences of others.

**PRAGMATIC**
I am honest, practical and objective when considering life, problems and needs.

**PURPOSEFUL**
I am committed to accomplishing something and being someone.

**OPTIMISTIC**
I am comforted by the hopeful and positive parts of a situation.
THE READINESS PRACTICES

WHAT ARE READINESS PRACTICES?
Research and experience tell us that there are a set of practices that adults can put in place that increase the chance that young people successfully develop the Readiness Abilities. These practices, like the Abilities, can occur in any place where youth spend time. The Practices are consistent with what many researchers and practitioners call positive youth development, an approach that is widely used in out-of-school programs and can work in any youth setting.

ENvironments
- that are community-oriented
- relational
- resourced
- safe and structured
- socially and culturally responsive
- strengths-based
- youth-centered

People
- who coach and care
- equip and empower
- skillfully plan and execute
- train and assess

Experiences
- that are stage and age appropriate
- build skills and mastery
- challenge and engage
- connect to real life
- encourage agency and choice
- promote group work

Space and Time
- to observe and explore
- practice and demonstrate
- apply and connect
- reflect and refine
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The Problem
Too many young people lack the abilities they need to meet life’s demands

Readiness Gaps
There are deep and persistent gaps among young people, as well as gaps between the abilities that youth have and those that they need in order to be ready for their next stage—school, college, work, and life.

Systems & Settings Traps
Serious and often unintended "traps" in youth-serving systems affect some young people disproportionately, narrowing or cutting off their paths forward. In addition, placement and progress are often determined by age and time rather than ability.

Thoughtful but Fragmented Solutions
Practices and programs have emerged to address these gaps and traps. Yet these approaches, although thoughtful, are typically limited to one system or youth population.

The good news: these gaps and traps are becoming more visible, and urgency is building to address them. Yet the strategies and approaches are fragmented...

OUR SOLUTION ➤
A New Kind Of Problem Analysis

Identify the TRAPS affecting the young people you serve
Figure out the extent of the GAPS being fueled by these TRAPS

System & Setting Traps
- Age as proxy for Stage
- Time as proxy for Progress
- Completion as proxy for Competence
- Access as proxy for Quality

Readiness Gaps
- Achievement Expectations
- Opportunity Skills