



Taking Charge: A School-Based Life Skills Program for Adolescent Mothers

Mary Beth Harris, Cynthia Franklin

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Taking Charge is the first empirically tested program of its kind, designed specifically to improve academic achievement and self-sufficiency for adolescent and teenage mothers, who face increased risk of dropping out and experiencing poverty. This eight-session, in-school group intervention uses cognitive-behavioral principles to bolster life skills such as focusing on action, setting goals, solving problems, and coping. The message embedded in the curriculum is one of self-efficacy and self-confidence, drawing on young women's strengths and teaching them how to manage the challenges of school, relationships, parenting, and employment. A treatment manual with detailed guidelines for establishing and leading a culturally diverse group, this guide also reviews the successful results of three school-based trials of the program, vividly illustrated with vignettes and containing all of the handouts and materials necessary for a school-based professional to implement the program.

- Groups can be led by social workers, counselors, school nurses, teachers, and even volunteers with little additional training
- An all-in-one treatment manual provides dialogue, forms, and handouts for facilitators to use in each session
- Empowers young women to take charge of their education and develop skills that will help them succeed in school and in life

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