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 **Be Life**

 **Ready®**

 Introduction

Be Life Ready® is an engaging, educational program designed for teens and adults to provide practical information and commonsense approaches to act as a catalyst for learning how to achieve greater academic, career, and personal success. This Facilitator’s Guide will serve as a valuable resource for anyone wanting to help others gain better control of their lives and reach their full potential.

**Please note**: All page references are from the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book by Al Foderaro and Denise Schmidt. A 78-page soft cover copy can be ordered at [www.belifeready.com](http://www.belifeready.com).

For best results each program participant should have a personal copy of the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book to reference during the presentation and beyond.

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**Slides 1 and 2:** Title slide and credits.

**Slide 3:** **Picture of Road**

[Pages 1 and 2, 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book]

Have this slide on the screen while people are entering the room. Start the program by asking what the road means to them. It could represent the road leading to their future.

Emphasize that a person’s life is one decision after another. Where their roads lead is up to them! Along their roads of life there will be times when they have to make important decisions which will impact the overall quality of their lives.

Be Life Ready® is about helping gain important information to prepare for making those decisions and to create a more satisfying life by increasing chances of achieving greater academic, career, and personal success.

**Slide 4** **This next hour is about you and only you!**

Be Life Ready® is all about people and how it will impact what they feel, think, do, and could become. All it takes is a willingness to commit time and energy to learn how to make the right choices along life’s road.

**Slide 5: Be Life Ready® Goals**

[Pages 1 and 2, 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book]

Be Life Ready® is to help gain confidence and learn how to increase chances of creating a more fulfilling life. The focus of Be Life Ready® is providing practical, commonsense information and approaches that if applied will result in having a more productive and meaningful existence.

**Activity:** Ask yourself this question, “What kind of life have I had?” Is it a good life or could it be better? The answers to those questions are determined by decisions that were made in the past.

Ask yourself this question, “What kind of life would I like to be able to have?” This answer will be determined by decisions being made now and in the future. Those decisions will have the most significant impact on your life.

**Slide 6: To Be Life Ready®**

[Page 74, 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® Book]

Refer to the Be Life Ready® Pledge found on the back cover of the Guidebook.

Emphasize that if a person cares about himself, he should be willing to pledge to spend time and energy, now and throughout his life, addressing the Keys to Be Life Ready®.

Accept responsibility and be held accountable for the decisions made, the actions taken, and the results produced. The quality of life will be measured by the major decisions that are made and the outcomes of those decisions.

**Slides 7 and 8: 9 Keys to be Life Ready®**

 [Page 2, 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book]

The Keys to Be Life Ready® focus on 9 critical topics that a person should address if they hope to create a satisfying life.

Hold up a copy of the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® and mention that each key is addressed in the book.

#1 Be educated and a lifelong learner. #6 Focus on personal development.

#2 Create and maintain a success team. #7 Be knowledgeable of skills.

#3 Develop a success plan. #8 Market yourself and interview

#4 Use an effective decision-making positively.

 process. #9 Understand how to find a job.

#5 Make good big-ticket decisions.

**Slide 9: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book**

The 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book is a valuable resource which should be kept as a reference tool whenever addressing any of the Keys to Be Life Ready®.

**Slide 10: Key #1 Be Educated and a Lifelong Learner**

[Pages 4 to 7, 9 Keys to Be Life Ready®, Be Educated and a Lifelong Learner]

Education is critical to a person’s success. Having a strong educational foundation is essential for graduating high school and continuing at a two or four-year college. Being educated also leads to other job training opportunities for individuals who decide not to attend college.

Commit to graduating high school and becoming a lifelong learner because the level of education impacts a person’s level of success and income potential.

Numerous research studies have revealed that:

* High school dropouts are less likely to be steadily employed, and earn less income than those who graduate from high school.
* Approximately one-third of high school dropouts nationwide are steadily employed but they are more than twice as likely to live in poverty.
* The median income for high school dropouts is much lower than the median income for high school graduates and significantly lower than college graduates.

Committing to education is necessary not only to get a job but to keep one. Lifelong learning is required to keep up with rapid advances in technology and new developments in today’s workplace.

**Activity:** Ask individuals whom you view as successful how they approached learning in their lives. Ask individuals who work at jobs that are unappealing or unchallenging, how seriously they took their education. Do they wish they had tried harder in school? If the individuals dropped out, do they wish they had stayed in school? Would they approach education differently if they were given another chance? Analyze the responses and then ask yourself how much of a commitment to education you are willing to make.

**Slide 11: Create and Maintain a Success Team**

[Pages 9 to 13: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Develop a Success Team]

Ask how many people ever played a team sport and if they could have won a game all by themselves? Discuss how individual players don’t win games, teams do. Teamwork and the support from others are necessary to achieve success.

Team success happens not only on the playing field but also in life. People striving for success need to build and effectively manage their own success team.

Create a Success Team. It should be comprised of people who care and want to help. Invite individuals to join the team who will be supportive and assist in identifying and overcoming personal or academic issues which stand in the way of reaching academic and career goals. Develop these relationships and utilize any and all support services from the success team individuals.

**Slide 12: Why a Success Team?**

[Page 10: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Create Your Own Success Team]

There are few times in life when success can be achieved individually. Teams have coaches to help players support each other and succeed. Individuals need success team members to provide assistance and support the same way coaches help a team win.

Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness but rather it is a sign of maturity. Never hesitate getting help. As soon as any potential obstacles to achieving success are identified, a success team member should be utilized.

As personal needs change the members of the success team may change, but the goal is always the same; to provide support that results in success.

Develop this philosophy of enlisting support from others, and use it throughout life to turn wishes into reality. Keep in mind that few of us succeed alone.

**Slides 13 and 14: Use a Success Team Inventory to Create One**

 **Your Success Team Members Are Always There to**

 **Guide You and Cheer You On**

Emphasize how Success Team members are always there to guide you and cheer you on to success. They are people you choose who care about you and are willing to assist and encourage you.

**Activity:** Refer to Page 11 of the 9 Keys to Be the Be Life Ready® book and tell participants to use the Success Team Inventory to assemble their Success Team.

Refer to the six categories from the Success Team Inventory when deciding who to include as members of their teams.

**Slides 15 and 16: Key #3 Develop a Success Plan**

[Pages 14 to 21: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Develop a Success Plan]

A Success Plan is a personal road map. It helps establish plans and goals and it is a guide to making important decisions for the future.

**Activity:** Refer to the Be Life Ready® Success Planner in the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready book on page 14 and encourage participants to begin to collect information that will help set academic, career, and personal goals.

Reference all of the headings that appear on Slide 16 highlighting the kind of information that will be needed when developing a Success Plan. Information will need to be updated as interests and abilities change.

**Slide 17: Key #4: Use an Effective Decision-Making Process**

[Pages 22 to 23: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Use an Effective Decision-Making Process]

The assumption is that people will know how to make important decisions when they need to be made. Most people, however, are never taught the importance of making good decisions nor the process of making them effectively.

**Slide 18:** **Making a good decision is a process and one that**

 t**akes time and effort!**

[Page 23: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, The Six-Step Decision-Making Process]

Making good decisions requires effort. If you care about yourself and the direction your future will take, commit to working hard to gather information about each alternative you are considering.

**Slide 19: Start Making Good Decisions Today**

Decision making isn’t something that comes naturally. It is a lifetime skill that needs to be learned and practiced.

In life, good decisions lead to good outcomes and bad decisions result in poor outcomes and missed opportunities. Your goal is to make decisions that result in favorable outcomes and greater success.

**Slide 20: Decision-Making Process**

[Pages 24 to 28: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, D E C I D E]

The decision-making process has six steps. By addressing each one you will increase your chances of achieving favorable outcomes which will meet your most important needs and wants.

**Define** the decision to be made > **Evaluate** your needs and wants >

**Compile** a list of realistic alternatives> **Investigate** each alternative >**Determine** the best alternative > **Establish** a plan and implement it.

**D E C I D E**

**Step one –** **Define the Decision to be Made**

The decision should be stated clearly so whoever you tell will understand what it is you are trying to decide.For example, rather than simply asking “What should I do after high school?” a student could more clearly ask “What college should I attend?”, “What kind of work should I do?”, or “What branch of the military should I enlist?”

**Step two- Evaluate Your Needs and Wants**

Before making a significant decision identify your most important needs and wants which will help you to select your best alternatives. Self-assessment inventories are useful tools to identify interests, skills, values, needs, and wants, Specific interest inventories are available in schools and colleges or Internet sites where self-assessment tools are available.

**Step three - Compile a List of Realistic Alternatives**

The next step is to gather information about occupations, educational alternatives, lifestyle options, and labor market trends. Using this information, identify alternatives to be researched further. This part of the process will require a strong commitment to spending the time necessary to gather useful information.

**Step four - Investigate Alternatives**

Spending sufficient time gathering information about each alternative will help to select the best alternatives and to be better prepared to explain or defend decisions to others.

**Step five- Determine the Best Alternative**

Rate and select the best alternatives. Thoroughly analyzing all of the possible alternatives will help select the best choices. The goal is to identify the one alternative that meets your most important needs and wants.

**Step six- Establish a Plan and Implement It**

After selecting the best alternative, develop plans to implement your decision. This is very important because a decision is not a decision until action is taken to achieve the desired outcome.

**Slide 21: Personal Filtering System Chart**

[Page 26: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Decision-Making Chart]

Define a good decision as one that has a favorable outcome and meets the majority of the decision maker’s most important needs and wants. Your needs and wants, not what others think you need and want, are most important.

This chart can be used to visualize and organize information to rank each alternative. By listing your most important needs and wants you create a personal filtering system to rate and select the best alternative.

**Slide 22: What If You Are Choosing Which College to Attend or Which Job to Accept?**

[Page 25: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Sample College Decision Chart]

Teens and adults are faced with having to make many decisions pertaining to education, fields of study, career choices and training options. Those decisions have a direct correlation with career and life opportunities.

**Slide 23: College Decision-Making Chart**

[Page 25: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Sample College Decision Chart]

The chart on page 25 of the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready book is a useful tool in the decision-making process. If you are trying to choose colleges, you may want to rate individual schools on what you identified as the most important criteria. These top ten criteria will need to be met in order to be satisfied with your decision.

**Slide 24: Decision-Making: College Chart With The X’s**

[Page 25: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Sample College Decision Chart]

After you gather all of the information about your choices, fill in the charts and determine which of your “top ten” needs and wants would be satisfied by each of the alternatives.

**Slide 25: Decision-Making: Job Chart**

[Page 25: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Sample Job Decision Chart]

Another example is one involving the selection of jobs that meet individual criteria for job satisfaction. By thoroughly researching alternatives, determining your needs and wants, and comparing the choices, an informed decision can be made.

**Slide 26: Decision-Making Chart: Job Chart With X’s**

[Page 25: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Sample Job Decision Chart]

Remind participants that when they are making decisions, they need to select the alternatives that will satisfy the highest percentage of their selection criteria. There may be no one alternative that meets 100% of an individual’s needs and wants. If that is the case, choosing the alternative that meets the majority of the criteria is appropriate.

**Slide 27: Realize**

[Page 1: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Why Were the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® created]

Be Life Ready® was created based on an understanding that the quality of a person’s life is a direct result of the choices he or she makes. The more proficient a person becomes at making decisions that produce favorable outcomes, the more likely a happier, more successful life will result. All it takes is a willingness to commit time and energy to learn how to make the right choices.

**Slide 28: Improve your chances of being satisfied by……….**

[Page 22: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Key# 4 Use an Effective Decision-Making Process]

You will increase your chances of being satisfied if you learn how to use a deliberate and thoughtful approach to making decisions. The most important decisions are the ones you make from today forward. These are the decisions that will improve your life.

**Slide 29: Key #5 Make Good Big-Ticket Decisions**

[Pages 32 to 33: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Key # 5 Make Good Decisions in Life’s 7 Big-Ticket Areas]

Regardless of what age you are, you probably have been asked to make important decisions. How did you make those decisions? Did you choose the first thing that came to mind? Did you let others make those decisions for you? Did you avoid making the decision as long as possible?

If you are like most people, you have never been taught how to make decisions properly even though decision-making impacts all areas of your life. Becoming successful requires the ability to make good big-ticket decisions, the ones that impact you the most.

**Slide 30: Were they…… good, bad, right or wrong……?**

Regardless of what point you are in your life, the outcomes of many of your decisions- good or bad, right or wrong- have determined the directions your life has taken. Will you, in the years to come, be satisfied with your life or will you be dissatisfied? By making decisions that produce favorable outcomes you will gain greater control of your life and increase the likelihood that you will be a happier person.

**Slide 31: Big-Ticket Decisions**

[Pages 32 to 45: These pages highlight each Big-Ticket Decision]

Throughout your life, you will need to make decisions in these “big-ticket” areas, and the choices that you make along the way will define your life and the direction it will take. The decisions that you make in these seven areas will have the greatest impact on you feeling satisfied with your life.

**Activity:** Discuss what each of the big-ticket decisions involves and why it is important to become an effective decision-maker in those areas. The better prepared you are to make these big-ticket decisions, the more confidence you’ll have, and the more likely you’ll achieve greater success in life.

**Slide 32: Think about your life….**

Think about what kind of life you have now. Is it the kind of life you want to have?

**Slide 33: Level of Satisfaction is Based Upon**

The outcomes of the big-ticket decisions and whether the decision-maker’s most important needs and wants were met will determine a person’s level of satisfaction. The more needs and wants that are met the greater the level of contentment.

**Slide 34: Are You In Transition?**

Due to a variety of circumstances, a significant number of teens and adults are transitioning from one period or situation in their lives to another. Going to college, changing jobs, experiencing a divorce, becoming unemployed, relocating to another state, or an unexpected death are examples that may cause a transitional period to occur in someone’s life.

A period of transition involves the need for an individual to reappraise their existing life structure and to determine if any changes are necessary in either themselves or their environment. Think of a person’s life structure as being comprised of the outcomes of a person’s big-ticket decisions.

Although transitional periods are often stressful, many people take the opportunity to make new choices. These choices can result in positive life changes. Utilizing an effective decision-making process can help people transition from an unstable period into a stronger, stable one.

**Slide 35: What You Need to Do**

The most important thing to do to pass through a transitional period of your life is make quality decisions that result from understanding how to utilize an effective decision-making process. You cannot skip any steps in the process. Make the commitment to work through all six steps in the process, if you expect to make informed decisions that result in favorable outcomes.

Although others might try to intervene, help you do research or try to influence your decisions, the final decisions belong to you.

Do everything you can to make educated decisions. Accept responsibility and be accountable for making your own decisions.

**Slide 36: The Truth Is**

Individuals dictate and define their own levels of satisfaction and success and

can achieve them by making good decisions and setting realistic goals.

**Slide 37: Key #6 Focus On Personal Development**

[Page 47: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Key #6 Focus on Personal Development]

Personal development is a significant component of a person’s overall career developmental process that evolves throughout teen and adult years. Commit time and energy to completing a number of recommended developmental activities each year.

To gain the maximum benefit some tasks may need to be completed multiple times in different environments. By doing so you will acquire valuable information about yourself and the world of work which you’ll need before finalizing your academic and career choices.

**Slide 38: Personal Development Checklist**

[Page 48: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Be Life Ready® Personal Development Checklist]

**Activity:** Refer to the Personal Development Checklist in the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book. Discuss how the list of recommended activities can serve as a guide for anyone evolving through the different stages of life’s developmental process.

In order to gain the greatest amount of information, complete as many of the tasks as possible.

The checklist can help keep track of progress while also helping to set yearly goals based on which activities have not been addressed. The checklist can also be used as a discussion piece when talking to a counselor or a member of a success team.

**Slide 39: Be Life Ready Key # 7 Be Knowledgeable of Skills**

Define a skill as simply an ability to do something, whether it is a natural ability or one learned.

**Activity:** Write down skills you possess which can be applied in a job setting. After a minute, stop and look at the list. Discuss that most individuals have difficulty identifying skills that can be applied to an activity or career.

**Slide 40: There Are 3 Basic Skill Types**

[Page 51: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready book®, Key # 7, Be Knowledgeable of Skills]

There are three basic skill types to consider; personal/self-management; functional/transferable; and technical/special knowledge. Being familiar with these different types of skills, will make it easier to describe yourself, the different kind of activities or functions you perform well, and the specific knowledge you possess. Think of the three skill types in words that best describe what I am, what I do, and what I know.

**Activity:** Refer to the 3 skill inventories on pages 52 to 55 in the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book.

Once each of the assessment exercises are completed, you’ll be able to describe your top 5 skills for each of the three skill types, and be able to identify where and when those skills were developed. You will be prepared to give an example or two to support your skills.

**Slide 41: Be Life Ready® Key # 8 Market Yourself and Interview**

**Positively**

[Pages 57 to 58: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready®, Market Yourself and Interview Positively]

Throughout your lives there will be times when you will be interviewed to determine your qualifications. It is important to understand the purpose for the interview and what you and the interviewer are seeking. The interview might be to gain acceptance into a school or college, to receive a scholarship, or to be hired for a paid or volunteer job.

The ideal interview is one in which a conversation takes place and there is a mutual exchange of information. Since the main topic of the discussion will be you, you need to examine your strengths by understanding and inventorying your

strongest abilities and skills. You’ll be able to express the kind of activities, tasks, and roles you prefer. Be ready to provide supporting examples as proof of how you acquired the knowledge or skills that you possess.

**Activity:** Preparation is the key to a good interview and by being prepared you will also be able to approach the interview feeling less nervous and more confident. Prepare by visualizing yourself in the interview situation and tailor your presentation to market yourself accordingly.

There are some generic interview questions on pages 59 to 61 in the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book which you can use to develop effective responses. By preparing and practicing responses to the questions in the book, you’ll be better prepared to promote your background and skills in a positive manner.

**Slide 42: Key #9 Understand How to Find a Job**

[Pages 62 to 64: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Key #9 Understand How to Find a Job]

An ideal job is defined as one you get paid for doing what you enjoy, solving problems you like doing, working in an environment you prefer, and being with individuals with similar interests. Analyzing that four part definition for any available position will be useful when you are looking for a job.

If you can visualize yourself in the job, using the four part definition, you’ll be better prepared to communicate to an employer why you are applying and why you are well qualified to perform all of the most critical functions of the job.

Understanding how to find a job begins with knowing how to effectively convince an employer that you are the most qualified applicant for their position. Imagine yourself in the job and prove that you possess the skills to satisfy the employer’s most important needs.

**Slides 43 and 44: Finding a Job Requires…**

 **Understand the Job Search Process**

[Page 63: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Understand the Employer’s Needs and Be Viewed as the Best Solution to Their Problem]

Finding a job requires having knowledge of and being prepared to navigate through each level of the job search process. The better understanding of the process, the more likely to be offered one.

Your goal is to be able to connect your skills and problem solving abilities to the employer’s most important needs for which the position was created.

**Slide 45: Job Searching Formula**

[Page 65: 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® book, Be Life Ready® Job Search Formula]

View the job searching formula and start on the right side with the job and follow the arrows to the bottom. Every job has a job description that describes the activities, tasks, and roles, which can also be thought of as the functions, required of the job. Those functions need to be completed in order to solve the employer’s needs which represent a corresponding problem. If an individual is considered to be the most qualified to solve the problem, that person will be hired and paid a salary commensurate with the level of difficulty the problem represents.

On the left side of the formula the job searcher needs to start at the bottom and spend time inventorying all past experiences to analyze the most significant activities, tasks, and roles performed.

The next step is to complete the skills inventory to identify the highest level of skills that match those required to perform the job. Once a person identifies the skills that match the job requirements, he or she needs to be able to provide proof by example of where and when those skills were mastered and utilized. If adequate proof is provided the employer will make a job offer.

**Slide 46: It’s Your Decision, Choose to Be Life Ready**

To Be Life Ready® requires that you make an effort, invest the time, and focus on each of the 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® in order to achieve positive results.

**Slide 47: Be Life Ready®, You’ll Be Glad You Are!**