

Faith-Based Holistic Ministry Model

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt unclear about the focus and limits of Christian ministry? How invested can (should) the church be with the social needs of our community or of poorer communities nearby? Clearly there are some needs that mandate engagement by God's people such as feeding the starving or caring for the homeless! Yet, even these raise questions of limits. While we might feed the poor with a real sense of God's encouragement to do so, would we pay their cable bill or spend dollars given for ministry to buy them designer clothes? Do we have a strategy or plan that creates either focus for social ministry or boundaries on it?

For some, the answers have been to focus almost exclusively on proclaiming the truths of the Gospel with the hope that people transformed by the Gospel will figure out the social challenges. For others the answer has been to move towards social needs, with some even losing track of the ministry of proclamation in favor of "living out the gospel." While both of these directions have virtue, many have begun to see the need to bring the best of both of these proposals together into a more "holistic gospel."

It is this pursuit that has given rise to the following draft proposal for a holistic ministry model. It has drawn from the practical experience of grassroots ministry workers who have struggled with these philosophical questions while serving needy families in our community. The goal of this proposal is to clarify a model that can be applied in any neighborhood and provide a roadmap for bringing a vibrant and focused gospel to that community. Furthermore it should create a practical approach to community diagnosis, strategy building, partnership and co-laboring between churches across the economic spectrum of our community to effectively reach our neighborhoods (rich and poor) with an appropriate message. Finally, this model should help define Biblical limits to the social involvement of the faith community so that finite kingdom resources do not become hopelessly overburdened on infinitely expanding social programs.

KEY FOUNDATION BLOCKS

As with any plan there are several philosophical assumptions that support the thinking of this proposal. For the sake of clarity we will attempt to identify them briefly as follows:

Empowering changed people to change their world

We believe that evil pervades our fallen world and that this evil is found on a personal level as well as within the systems of our government and community. This model and strategy however targets the needs and challenges of the person. We believe that a growing community of empowered, Godly people will be sufficient to change their community while the opposite is not always true.

Dignity and motivation in ministry

We believe that in general doing for someone something they can do for themselves strips them of their dignity. Identification of key outcome areas for ministry does not presume that we supersede the individual person's responsibility to provide those outcomes for themselves wherever possible.

The need for a collaborative model

We believe that general revelation has created a drive within all mankind to help those less fortunate. As a result, the moralists within the secular community can often be found attempting to meet some of the needs we have identified. We believe God would have us build bridges instead of walls with these people. Through these relationships we can maximize the resources of the Church. An added benefit is that while building winsome co-laboring relationships with lost people, we create opportunity to share our faith with them while also fulfilling our mission as the church.

A HOLISTIC MODEL PROPOSAL

Relational Context-The Primary Domain and Foundation

Research from diverse sectors of the social service fields has begun building a compelling case for something God has advised us on from the beginning; people are "hardwired to connect." That is to say that we are created as relational beings and at the deepest levels of our being will only be fulfilled when we are in healthy relational contexts with both God and other people. Yet, the art of building authentic relationships seems to be a disappearing skill in our culture. We believe that all efforts to touch our communities with the gospel must be built on an effort to build relationally redemptive contexts. Put another way, we believe the Church is God's chosen institution for helping people be restored with God and others, and this mandate permeates all other activities.

Five interactive sub-domains of the Relational Context

Spiritual and Moral Literacy

From the great commission we understand that our mission is disciple making. This encompasses both the mandate to share the gospel with the lost and the need to help believers align their lives with the spiritual and moral directions taught in Scripture.

Economic Literacy

From the time of the garden onward, mankind was given the mandate to provide for our families through meaningful work and Godly stewardship of the resources produced from that work. We believe that we should be concerned that people have the ability to find meaningful work, and that they understand Godly stewardship as a means for providing for themselves, their families and others.

Education

Neither wisdom nor maturity seems to be easily attained by those without a basic education. For those who cannot read, both the Bible and a universe of written wisdom are practically out of reach. We believe, like Christians have throughout the centuries, that a good education is a critical tool in disciple making. As a result, we believe we should be concerned that people have the ability and opportunity to succeed educationally.

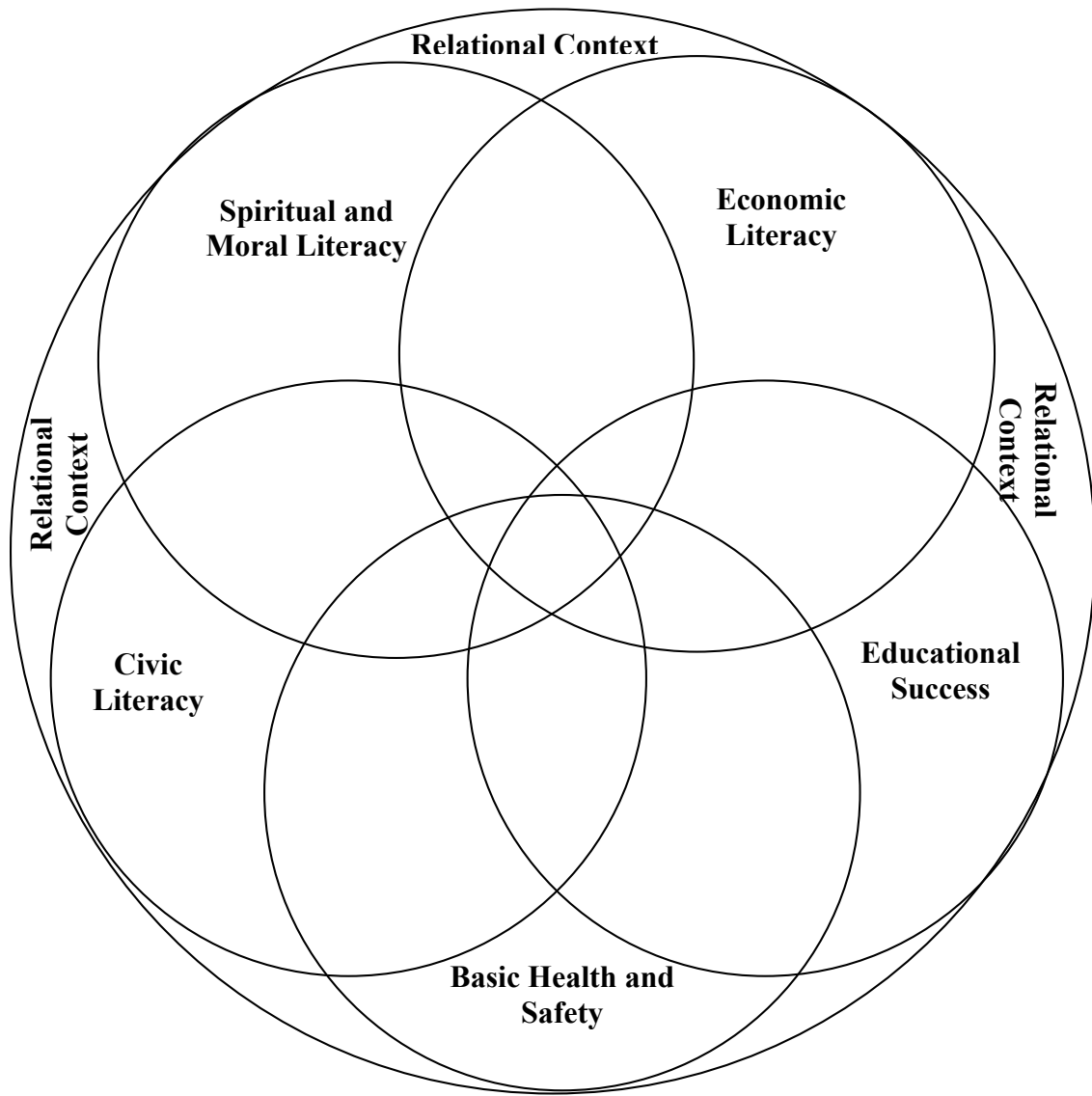
Basic health and safety

Jesus spent much of his ministry healing the sick and protecting the weak. The theme of social justice in this area seems to be a consistent theme of Scripture. Furthermore, practical experience shows that people with significant health and safety concerns are distracted from making much progress in spiritual matters until their situation is stabilized and their fundamental needs are met.

Civic Literacy

Living in a society is not an option for most of humanity. Yet many do not do it well! Too often people do not know how to resolve conflict, appreciate diversity, or solve problems together within the social or governmental institutions of society. This inability leads to a “go it alone” approach to issues and problems that can be ineffective and destructive to those already in life need. We believe we are called to teach and model how people can live in peace and become agents of positive social change within the systems of that community.

Taken together, these six areas of ministry interest can be visualized in the illustration below:



IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES

As we move from theoretical to practical, we propose the identification of specific measurable outcomes for each sphere of this model. These measurable outcomes are grouped and identified as follows:

Relational Context

- Appropriate Interpersonal Transparency
- Ability to Trust
- Quality and Quantity of Peer Relationships
- Quality and Quantity of Family Relationships
- Quality and Quantity of Other Adult Relationships
- The Person Values Interpersonal Community

Spiritual and Moral Literacy

- Seeker of Truth
- Spiritual Knowledge
- Has a Personal Faith
- Demonstrates Personal Responsibility
- Is actively cultivating a Relationship With God
- Demonstrates Godly Character

Economic Literacy

- Job Skills-Soft Skills
- Job Skills-Hard Skills
- Employment Status
- Employment Retention
- Income Meets Expenses
- Money Management Skills and Tools

Education

- Age Appropriate Academic Ability
- Age Appropriate Academic Success
- Study Skills/Learning Skills
- Values Life Long Learning

Basic Health and Safety

- Do They Feel Safe?
- Access to Sufficient Food, Clothing, and Shelter
- Access to Physical and Mental Healthcare
- Indicators of Abuse or Neglect
- Disabilities
- Appropriate Sexuality
- Appropriate Use of Drugs and Alcohol

Civic Literacy

- Pro-Social Conflict Resolution Skills
- Pro-Social Collaboration Skills
- Able to Problem Solve In Systems
- Understand Diversity and Cultural Issues
- Understands and Values Civic Participation
- Serves Others in Civic or Social Efforts

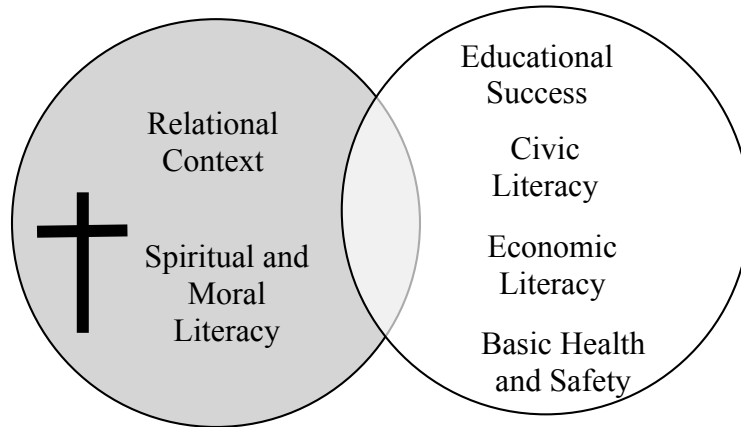
ADDING A COMPONENT FOR COLLABORATION

As soon as we consider the question of collaboration, the first reaction of many is “Why should the church or faith-based organizations partner with faith neutral organizations?” A few ideas come to mind when we consider this question:

- Collaboration helps us prioritize the time and resources of the faith community on its unique contributions by eliminating unnecessary duplication of work and by honoring and encouraging financial investment and time investment from secular people.
- Collaboration provides quality opportunities for people of faith to build partnerships and relationships with faith neutral organizations as well as non-Christian service providers. This provides a rich opportunity for personal evangelism with secular workers who very well may be seeking to honor God the best way they know how through their service.
- Collaboration demonstrates respect and appreciation for the skills and abilities God has placed in others. This produces a tangible sense of appropriate humility.

A follow-up question that often arises is “How should faith-based organizations partner with faith neutral organizations?” We believe that our approach provides a clear method of accomplishing this task. The first step is to identify components of the holistic model that are critical to be provided by the faith community and cannot be delegated to secular people. In our experience, the relational context and the area of spiritual and moral literacy fit this description. It is our opinion that these domains of work must always remain the call of God’s people. They cannot be delegated to a secular person or agency by way of collaboration.

The next step is to consider whether a collaborative partner exists who is capable of adequately addressing the outcomes proposed by the holistic model. If so then they become a candidate for collaboration if they are willing. A key in this process is to also identify those who are willing to commit to the outcomes as described in this model. If these partners can be found and enlisted, then it seems wise to address these social needs through collaboration for the reasons outlined above. Below is a graphic representing this approach to collaboration.



Two philosophical cautions emerge in the implementation of this approach. First, to fully implement this strategy, the Church or Christian organization should maintain a quality control concern over areas of the model being served through collaborative partnerships. It is not enough to have a partner in economic literacy if the required outcomes in economic literacy are not likely to be produced by the strategies and models of that partnering agency. The win of working in collaboration cannot supersede the imperative of producing the results identified in the model.

The second caution is that even an ideal collaborating partner from a secular world view may need to either embrace some of the philosophical training of the model, or else the Christian ministry will have to augment their training (demonstrated by the overlapping in the circles in the model). A specific example of this might be the goal of training generosity and giving as part of a Christian approach to economics. Many quality programs exist that might teach job skills well, but will never include a training component on giving. To partner with a secular agency providing such training should cause the Christian ministry to develop the curriculum on giving and either: a) ask the collaborating agency to include it in their program, or b) the Christian ministry should provide giving training under one of their programs and intentionally target those who have completed the secular training program.

Diagnosis Grids

Finally, in order to move from outcomes to measurement, it is important to identify a continuum of measurement for each outcome. In addition, we believe we should clearly identify the level of functionality at which the faith community can consider the outcome area to be sufficiently addressed. The following are proposed continuums of measurement for each outcome area.

Relational Context

	(Appropriate) Interpersonal Transparency	Ability to Trust	Qual & Quan of Peer Relationships	Quality of Family Relationships	Qual & Quan of *Other Adult Relationships	Values Interpersonal Community	
Thriving (9-10)	Initiates personal transparency and cultivates transparency in others.	Consistently seeks input and able to allow that input to affect their actions.	Has 7+ peer relationships. Is an initiator of pro-social activities with those friends..	Initiates overt communication of love and support within the family and resolves family conflict in a healthy way.	Has 5+ relationships with other adults and pursues meaningful conversation with them.	Is consistently involved in relational community and actively reaches out to include others.	
Safe (7-8)	Transparent upon invitation about personal issues.	Willing to accept input and able to allow that to affect their actions.	Has 5-7 peer relationships and participates in pro-social activities with them.	Regularly demonstrates overt communication of love and support and usually resolves family conflict in a healthy way.	Has 3-5 relationships with other adults and engages in meaningful conversation with them.	Is consistently involved in relational community.	
Stable (5-6)	Willing to talk but guarded about personal issues.	Willing to listen to input and occasionally able to act on it.	Has 3-5 peer relationships and participates with them in a mixture of pro-social and anti-social behaviors.	Occasionally communicates love and support within the family and has some ability to resolve family conflict.	Has 2-3 relationships with other adults and occasionally engages in meaningful conversation with them.	Occasionally involved in a relational community.	
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	Reluctant to talk and avoids discussion about personal issues.	Reluctant to accept input and seldom acts on that input.	Has 3-5 peer relationships and participates with them in primarily anti-social behaviors.	Frequent negative and critical communication in the family and limited ability to resolve family conflict.	1-2 relationships with other adults and seldom engages in meaningful conversation with them.	Reluctant to participate in a relational community.	
In Crisis (0-2)	Refusal to talk or discuss personal issues. Bearing many problems alone.	Refusal to listen to others and doesn't act on any input from others.	0-3 peer relationships and instigates anti-social behavior with friends.	Constant negative and critical communication, little to no ability to resolve family conflict and/or physical abuse.	Has no meaningful relationships with other adults.	Is unresponsive to invitations to be part of a relational community.	

Basic Health & Safety

	Do They Feel Safe?	(Access) to Sufficient Food, Clothing & Shelter	Physical and Mental Healthcare	Indicators of Abuse and/or Neglect	Disabilities	Appropriate Sexuality	Appropriate Use of Drugs and Alcohol
Thriving (9-10)	Feel safe and capable of protecting self and others.	Have plenty and give to others.	Is healthy, has access to healthcare, and participates in preventative healthcare.	Not in abusive or neglectful situations and coaches others to discern and avoid unsafe relationships and situations.	Has emotionally accepted the disability, is working to maximize life with the disability, and helping others.	Appropriately relates to opposite sex. Has fulfilling sexual relationship with spouse (if married). Helps others to overcome weaknesses in this area.	Does not abuse drugs or alcohol. Helps others who have problems in these areas.
Safe (7-8)	Feel safe and capable of protecting self.	Give little thought to being without adequate food clothing or shelter in the future.	Is healthy; has access to healthcare and has interest in their health.	Not in an abusive or neglectful situation and capable of identifying unsafe relationships and situations.	Has emotionally accepted the disability and appropriate assistance accessed.	Does not engage in sexual immorality. Has healthy relationships with opposite sex.	Does not abuse drugs or alcohol.
Stable (5-6)	Feel cautious and take a lot of precautions for security.	Have adequate food, clothing and shelter but are uncertain about maintaining it in the future.	Have a minor untreated illness, have access to healthcare, and some interest in their health.	Not in an abusive or neglectful situation but undiscerning in avoiding unsafe relationships or situations.	Disability is identified. Beginning to wrestle with the implications and appropriate assistance accessed.	Has a developing understanding of appropriate sexuality but occasionally fails to live consistently with that understanding	Generally doesn't abuse drugs or alcohol
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	Feel threatened from an unspecific source.	Have an unpredictable supply of food, have temporary living arrangements, or are getting by on donated clothing.	Have a minor untreated illness and can't get access to treatment and have little interest.	Symptoms consistent with abuse/neglect and/or undiscerning about unsafe relationships and situations.	Disability is identified but untreated. Disability is negatively impacting functionality or emotional well being.	A lifestyle of unrestrained sexuality with little to no understanding of appropriate sexuality.	Abuses drugs and/or alcohol on a regular basis.
In Crisis (0-2)	Feel threatened from specific individuals.	Doesn't have either food, a place to live, or clothing adequate for immediate needs.	Have a life altering untreated illness and can't get access to treatment or have no interest.	Visible signs of abuse and/or neglect and tends to be attracted to unsafe relationships and situations..	Disability is unidentified and/or person is in denial and creates an unsafe situation for self or others.	Is addicted to unsafe and inappropriate sexuality or sees sex as means of manipulation for personal gain.	Is addicted to the abuse of drugs or alcohol.

Spiritual/Moral Literacy

	Seeker of Truth	Spiritual Knowledge	Has a Personal Faith	Demonstrates Personal Responsibility	Cultivating Relationship w/ God	Demonstrates Godly Character	
Thriving (9-10)	Proactively seeks truth by practicing an ongoing critical evaluation of new information and existing personal beliefs. Willing to learn from and challenge others.	Has strong knowledge of the Bible, is able to answer questions about Biblical content, theological implications and practical application and teaches others.	A life/lifestyle that demonstrates a personal faith in God and a commitment to share that with others.	Has life pattern of successfully following through on responsibilities. Willing to admit failure and be proactive in resolving problems resulting from failure. Challenges others to do the same.	Regularly practicing prayer, the study of Scripture, fellowship and service to others as ways of relating to a personal God, and teaching others.	Values and lives a life consistent with Biblical character and able to inspire others to pursue the same.	
Safe (7-8)	Usually seeks truth and frequently willing to critically evaluate new information and personal beliefs.	Growing knowledge of the Bible and some understanding of its theology and application.	A profession of faith with external demonstration of that faith.	Usually understands and meets their personal responsibilities. Can sometimes admit failure.	Understands and regularly practices prayer, the study of Scripture, fellowship and service to others as ways of relating to a personal God.	Values and usually lives a life consistent with Biblical character.	
Stable (5-6)	Open to new information and sometimes allows it to shape personal beliefs.	Some knowledge of the Bible and limited understanding of the theology and application of the Bible.	A profession of personal faith without much external demonstration of that faith.	Generally understands personal responsibility and usually meets their obligations. Can avoid admitting failure when it happens or else blame others.	Generally understands and periodically practices prayer, study of Scripture, fellowship, and service to others as ways of relating to a personal God.	Trying to live a lifestyle of Biblical character but periodically fail in significant areas.	
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	Seldom allows new information to shape personal beliefs.	Limited knowledge of the content of the Bible and some ability to apply it.	Guarded towards a personal faith in God and has questions.	Admits personal responsibility, but frequently avoids it resulting in difficult life circumstances for self or others.	Some effort to grow in their relationship with God but limited knowledge on what to do or understands God as impersonal.	Discontent with a lifestyle of making immoral choices and attempting to change.	
In Crisis (0-2)	Not open to any information that conflicts with personal beliefs.	Little to no knowledge of the content of the Bible, the theology of the Bible or application.	Not interested in personal faith or advocates against the idea of personal faith in God.	Refuses to acknowledge personal responsibility resulting in severe life circumstances for self or others.	Disinterested in learning how to grow in their relationship with God.	Content with a lifestyle of consistently making immoral choices.	

Economic Literacy

	Job Skills - Soft	Job Skills - Hard	Employment Status	Employment Retention (History)	Income Meets Expenses	Money Management Skills & Tools	
Thriving (9-10)	On the job relationships and social behaviors are appropriate and winsome to the degree that other people seek opportunity to work with them.	Has sufficient training and experience in marketable job skill sets to qualify for multiple career paths and has experience training others in job related skills.	Has full time employment with a growing, reputable company.	Tends to stay with employers for 2 or more years as a pattern of employment.	Has adequate income to cover family needs, can afford some wants, has a cash reserve and gives towards the needs of others.	Understands credit, banking, budgeting, savings and investing resulting in personal financial strength with the capacity to teach and coach others.	
Safe (7-8)	On the job relationships and social behaviors are appropriate.	Has sufficient training and experience in marketable job skill sets to qualify for at least two career paths.	Has full time employment with a stable company.	Has been with at least one employer for 2 or more years.	Has adequate income to cover basic family needs, some wants, and is building a cash reserve.	Understands credit, banking, budgeting savings and investing. Has a good credit score and some assets.	
Stable (5-6)	On the job relationships and social behaviors are generally tolerable to co-workers.	Has sufficient training and experience in a marketable job skill to qualify for one career path.	Has full time employment.	Has a history of short term employment relationships but has been able to keep jobs until a new or better job opportunity arises.	Has adequate income to cover basic needs on a consistent basis.	Understands banking and credit enough to avoid financial loss and has adequate credit.	
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	On the job relationships and social behaviors are uncomfortable for co-workers resulting in periodic conflict.	Has some training or some experience in a marketable job skill area.	Is partially employed.	Has a history of short term employment with some instances of being laid off or fired.	Usually able to cover the cost of basic family needs but needs outside assistance occasionally.	Financial understanding and practices result in periodic financial loss and low credit.	
In Crisis (0-2)	On the job relationships and social behaviors create frequent conflict at work and have resulted in loss of employment.	Has neither training nor experience in any marketable job skill.	Is not employed.	Has a consistent history of being fired or laid off shortly after accepting a new job.	Has a history of inadequate income to meet the cost of basic family needs and depends on others to provide it.	Fails to practice basic banking, credit and money management skills resulting in regular financial loss and poor credit.	

Educational Success, Learning Skills Literacy

	Age Appropriate Academic Ability (3 R's)	Age Appropriate Academic Success (3 R's)	Study / Learning Skills	Values Life Long Learning	Tutoring or Teaching Others		
Thriving (9-10)	Ability to tutor and teach others in key academic areas.	Achieving age/grade appropriate academic goals within the school setting.	Values learning and studies to learn above and beyond assignments.	Recognizes learning is a personal responsibility and regularly self selects topics to learn about and studies them on their own.	Sees themselves personally responsible for giving back and helping others and pursues opportunities to do so.		
Safe (7-8)	Can keep up with age level work that is needed to do average or above work.	Achieving age/grade appropriate academic goals within the school setting.	Has basic study skills & can complete assignments without external support.	Recognizes learning as a personal responsibility and sometimes self selects topics to learn about.	Regularly responds to requests to give back and tutor others when asked.		
Stable (5-6)	Functionally literate. Knows some basic math and is able to write well enough to provide basic demographic information.	Performing at a level that is acceptable to remain within the regular school setting.	Wants to study & has some skills but needs external support to complete assignments.	Sees learning as a personal responsibility but connects learning only to school and or career advancement.	Sometimes responds to requests to give back and tutor others when asked.		
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	Struggles to advance along with age appropriate material.	Regularly gets disciplined and/or suspended from school.	Has some study skills but does not value studying to learn.	Wants to learn but does not see learning as a personal responsibility and is not proactive.	Will occasionally give back and tutor others but generally has no interest in giving back.		
In Crisis (0-2)	Can't read and/or do basic math and/or write legibly.	Been expelled or has dropped out of school.	Does not understand how to study and does not value or want to learn study skills.	No interest in learning things beyond what is required in some formal context.	Has no interest in giving back and refuses to help when asked.		

Civic Literacy

	Pro-social Conflict Res. Skills	Pro-social Collaboration Skills	Able to Problem Solve (navigate) in Systems	Understands Diversity & Cultural Issues	Understands & Values Civic Participation	Serves Others in Civic or Social Efforts	
Thriving (9-10)	Initiates as mediator or mediating influence in situation of conflict.	Collaborative leader who builds coalitions for the betterment of the community.	Confidence and a history of success in solving problems in social or civic systems. Helps others do the same.	Understands & appreciates the value of differences between people and actively promotes racial/cultural unity	Is a champion of social justice through civic participation and helps others learn to participate.	Organizes and leads service projects in the community.	
Safe (7-8)	Has an understanding of conflict resolution skills and practices them regularly.	Values collaboration & engages in collaborative efforts for the good of the community.	Is usually successful in solving problems in social or civic systems. Is optimistic about resolving future problems.	Understands & appreciates the value of differences between people and has friendships with people who are culturally different.	Is engaged in civic participation in a regular way and understands the social justice connection with civic participation.	Participates regularly in service to others in the community.	
Stable (5-6)	Has the self control to prevent conflicts from escalating into verbal or physical abuse or loss of relationship.	Understands own strengths & weaknesses and is willing to work with others for the good of the community.	Some success in trying to solve problems in social or civic systems. Believes that resolution can be had.	Has some understanding of the differences between people and open to discussion about their value.	Has some value for civic involvement and may occasionally participate.	Occasionally participates in some area of service in the community.	
Prevention / Intervention Line				Prevention / Intervention Line			
Vulnerable (3-4)	Doesn't have good conflict resolution skills and tends to respond to conflict with physical/verbal abuse and/or avoidance.	Independent spirit and is reluctant to work with others. Focuses mostly on personal gain instead of the good of the community.	Has a history of very limited success in trying to solve problems in social or civic systems. Has not given up trying.	Openly bigoted and participates in discriminatory comments against members of different cultural groups.	Has no value for civic involvement and doesn't understand the need for it.	Has little interest & rarely participates in service efforts in the community.	
In Crisis (0-2)	Makes no effort to resolve conflict. Regularly escalates conflict into situations that are destructive to self and others.	Independent spirit and rejects opportunities to work with others. Solely committed to personal gain resulting in negative result for the community.	Has a history of failure in trying to solve problems in social or civic systems and has reached a place of hopelessness with regard to future efforts.	Openly bigoted and/or participates in discriminatory acts against members of different cultural groups.	Has no understanding of civic involvement or the need for it and actively discourages others from participation.	Has no value for or interest in service to others or the community, and never participates.	