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Program Overview



The WI Challenge Academy Mission

Established in 1998, our mission is: *"To offer our Cadets the opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life-skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens."*

The National Guard's Youth Challenge Program is designed to intervene in the lives of at-risk youth, producing graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

The Five Academy Values

- Discipline – Training that develops self-control. The willingness to do what is required regardless of personal mood.
- Integrity – A strict adherence to a code of moral values or standard of conduct.
- Courage – A mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.
- Honor – A keen sense of ethical conduct, where one's word or signature is given as a guarantee of truthfulness or performance.
- Commitment – An agreement, pledge, or promise to do something in the future.

Program Phases

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy is a 17-month program divided into 2 phases, the Residential Phase and the Post Residential Phase.

Pre-Challenge - first two weeks of the program and precedes the Residential Phase,

- Each participant is addressed as Candidate
- Designed to orient Candidates to the physical and mental demands of the Challenge Program
- Highly structured quasi military environment
- Focus is on team work and learning the code of conduct
- Candidates are continually assessed by staff to evaluate their potential for success in the Residential phase
- Pre-Challenge is an acclimation period and the final phase of the selection process. Successful candidates graduate and earn the status of Cadet and can start the Residential Phase
- Candidates will not attend school until they become a Cadet and start the Residential Phase

Program Phases

The Residential Phase (Challenge Phase): Takes place at Fort McCoy and is 22 weeks long. This phase is designed to offer Cadets the opportunity to develop self-discipline, strength of character and the life skills necessary to succeed as adults. This is accomplished through the implementation of the Eight Core Components. During this phase Cadets can earn a high school credential and college credits. Cadets conclude this phase by completing a Post Residential Action Plan which is intended to be a road map for their future.

The Challenge Phase is divided into five sub phases:

1. Discipline Phase: Weeks 3-6
2. Integrity Phase: Weeks 7-10
3. Courage Phase: Weeks 11-14
4. Honor Phase: Weeks 15-18
5. Commitment Phase: Weeks 19-21

8 core components: The foundation of the Challenge Program intervention model.

1. Academic Excellence
2. Physical Fitness
3. Leadership/Followership
4. Health and Hygiene
5. Life-Coping Skills
6. Responsible Citizenship
7. Service to Community
8. Job Skills



The Post-Residential Phase: The Post-Residential phase is conducted during the 12-month period following commencement from the Residential Phase. During this period, the Cadet, under the guidance of a mentor, carries out a “Post-Residential Action Plan” they developed during the residential phase with goals of returning to their high school, pursuing higher education, finding full time employment, and/or joining one of the Armed Services. The mentor is there to help guide and assist your Cadet with staying on track. The mentor is not there to replace the daily role that you have in raising your Cadet.

NOTE: We are not a recruiting program for the National Guard or any military service. There is no military obligation for attending or graduating.

Program Success

The Challenge program is evidence-based. The RAND Corporation did “A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program” in 2012 and concluded the following:

- A return of \$2.66 for every dollar spent, or yields a 166 percent return on investment.
- Youth that attended the program:
 - Increased GED or High School diploma attainment
 - Increased College attendance
 - Increased vocation training and employment
 - Annual earnings increased by 20%

Source: http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1193.html.

WI Challenge Academy Class Stats from Class 1-47:

- 7,220+ applicants have been accepted to attend
- 5,350+ chose to attend (enrolled)
- 4,538+ fulfilled program requirements and graduated into the Post-Residential Phase
 - 82.5% Graduation Rate
- 3,233 of graduates earned a High School Equivalency Diploma: 82% Attainment Rate
- Graduates increased academic achievement by 1.1 grades (TABE)
- Since the program began awarding College credits in 2018, 100% of Graduates have earned 3 college credits
- On average, graduates have performed 60+ hours of Service to the Community
- 4,670 mentors have been trained statewide
- 668+ graduates have chosen to join the armed services.
- ~4,200 sets of parents/guardians have attended program-sponsored Parent Seminar

Part 2 Life at the Academy



A Typical Day during the Challenge Phase



*Days begin at 5:20 AM with "Toe the line!" Some PT (physical training) soon follows.
Every day has a "training schedule" Platoons closely observe.*

Time	Task
0520	Wake up and physical training
0630	Personal hygiene and barracks maintenance (showers, make beds, sweep/mop floors)
0730	Breakfast
0815-1215	Academic instruction (English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Character Development)
1230	Lunch
1300	Laundry, service to community, sports activities, study periods, non-academic training (first aid, CPR, rappelling, ropes course, archery), platoon development, etc.
1700	Dinner
1800	Study hall
2000	Mail call, personal time
2115	Lights out

Cadet Expectations

- a. **Improvement:** Each Cadet is required to participate and show improvement in all areas of the program. It is mandatory for each Cadet to show improvement in each of the program's eight Core Components to receive a commencement certificate.
- b. **Attendance:**
- Our agreement with the federal government dictates the number of days each Cadet must be in residence at the Challenge Academy. Because of this requirement, any leave period needs to be carefully planned. Please do not ask for exceptions to either pick your Cadet up early or return your Cadet late.
 - Failure to adhere to the Challenge Academy guidelines on your part can lead to administrative removal of your Cadet from the Challenge Academy.
 - Questions and issues regarding a family emergency will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- c. The Academy focuses on discipline, character-development, resilience, academics, work, and a balance of recreational activities.
- d. The Academy staff is comprised of well-trained, caring individuals whose goal is the success of your Cadet. The staff will use a "tough love" approach with your Cadet which will not include physical coercion techniques or harassment. Your support in having your Cadet follow the rules is imperative if we are to be successful. Disciplinary actions imposed upon your Cadet may entail having him or her do push-ups, or other forms of physical exercise. Academy policy disallows the use of physical force unless the Cadet's safety or the safety of others is at risk.
- e. Your Cadet will study many subjects while here at the Challenge Academy. In addition to the traditional subjects that focus on possibly attaining a HSED, we offer instruction in character development, resilience, physical training, anger management, etiquette, drug and alcohol abuse awareness, personal hygiene and diet, and leadership/followership.
- f. Each Cadet will also participate in service to community projects. The purpose of these projects is to teach the value of volunteerism and in making a positive contribution to the community without expectation of reward. The service itself being the reward.



Academic Excellence is just one of the 8 Core Components Cadets must show improvement on in order to graduate from the Academy.

Cadet Leadership Positions

While at the Academy, Cadets will have the opportunity to earn different leadership positions. All Cadets will have the opportunity to be a Squad Leader. Other positions and ranks are assigned based on merit and performance.



Cadets will work on their followership and leadership skills, earning ranks and positions. Some will be selected to represent our Drill Team.

Leadership Status Are as Follows:	
Cadet First Class	Status earned by accruing at least 15 merits and earning no more than 25 demerits in a two-week period. Status earns Cadet certain privileges.
Senior Cadet	Status earned by Cadets who are among the top of their class. Must apply and meet certain criteria. Status earns Cadet privileges above that of Cadet First Class.

Leadership Positions Are as Follows:	
Squad Leader	Oversees 5-8 Cadets within platoon making up a squad Beginning Week 3 (Discipline Phase)
Platoon Sergeant	Oversees entire platoon, consists of 3-4 squads Beginning Week 7 (Integrity Phase)
First Sergeant	Oversees entire company, consists of 2 platoons Beginning Week 11 (Courage Phase)
Sergeant Major	Oversees entire Cadet Corps Beginning Week 15 (Honor Phase)
Command Sergeant Major	Oversees entire Cadet Corps Beginning Week 19 (Commitment Phase)

Academy Terms, Definitions, and Mottos

Motto during the Residential Phase

"The Courage to Change!"

Motto during the Post-Residential Phase

"Courage to Continue!"

Cadet General Rules

1. I will think before I act.
2. I will follow all orders given to me.
3. I will not use profanity.
4. I will show respect to all others.
5. I will not fight.

Cadet Honor Code:

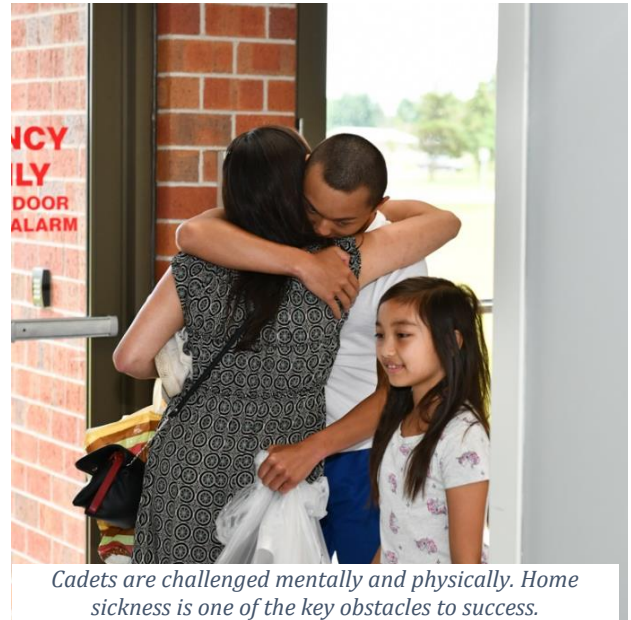
A Cadet will not lie, cheat or steal nor tolerate those who do.

Academy Values

1. **Discipline**—Training that develops self-control. The willingness to do what is required regardless of personal mood.
2. **Integrity**—A strict adherence to a code of moral values or standard of conduct.
3. **Courage**—A mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.
4. **Honor**—A keen sense of ethical conduct, where one's word or signature is given as a guarantee of truthfulness or performance.
5. **Commitment**—An agreement, pledge, or promise to do something in the future.

Cadet Creed

As a Cadet, I will always display the Courage and Discipline to choose the harder right over the easier wrong. The Honesty and Integrity I will display shall prove to others that I have changed. My Commitment to the values now instilled in me will be my final test, and I will succeed.



Cadets are challenged mentally and physically. Home sickness is one of the key obstacles to success.

Academy Terms, Definitions, and Mottos

Cadet Oath

Having been fully accepted as a Cadet at the Challenge Academy, I, *(state your full name)*, do solemnly promise that I will strictly adhere to my Cadet General Rules and the Cadet Honor Code.

That I will begin to use the values of Discipline...Integrity...Courage...Honor...and Commitment as a basis for my conduct.

And, to the best of my ability, I promise to follow the advice, the guidance, and instructions of the Staff, and that I will seek every opportunity to demonstrate the courage necessary to change my life.

Understanding Cadet Language

During your phone calls and letters you will hear a number of terms used at the Academy. Use the list below to make sense of what your Cadet is saying:

Understanding Cadet Language	
Cadre	Staff overseeing daily Cadet operations
CC	Commandant of Cadets (highest ranking Cadre)
ACC	Assistant Commandant of Cadets
STL	Senior Team Leader (oversees Team Leaders)
TL	Team Leader (works directly with Cadets 24 hours a day)
A1 (Alpha 1)	Alpha Company, First Platoon
A2 (Alpha 2)	Alpha Company, Second Platoon
B1 (Bravo 1)	Bravo Company, First Platoon
B2 (Bravo 2)	Bravo Company, Second Platoon
Quad	One per platoon and Comprised of an STL, counselor and instructor; oversees Cadet performance and progress
D-Code	Disciplinary Code (assigns certain actions for certain violations)
Merit	Points awarded for going above and beyond what is required
Demerit	Negative points given for misbehavior or noncompliance
Spot Report	Form that issues merits or demerits
Incident Report (IR)	Incident Report (form issuing demerits for major issues-greater than 5 demerits)
Disciplinary Board	Convened when Cadet accrues a large number of demerits or commits a serious offense
Academy Board	Made up of senior staff members who make recommendations for Cadet retention

Understanding Cadet Language	
Chow	Food
Rack	Bed
Latrine	Toilet/bathroom
Utilize	Use the latrine
Toe The Line	Line up in rows in front of beds for head count
Smoked	Extreme exhausting exercise
Corrective Action	Issued by Disciplinary Board as a result of substandard behavior
Squad	Group of 5-8 Cadets within a platoon
Platoon	Comprised of approximately 30 Cadets
Company	Comprised of 2 platoons
Corps	The entire class of Cadets
PT	Physical Training
Cadence	Song sung to establish marching rhythm
Double Time	Run as fast as you can
Front Leaning Rest Position	Pushups
Drill Team	Represents the Challenge Academy at parades. Must apply and meet and maintain certain standards
PFA	NGYCP Physical Fitness Assessment. Consists Events, Push-up, Sit-up, and 1-mile run
Parade Rest	Standing with legs shoulder width apart, hands crossed behind back at beltline
Position Of Attention (POA)	Standing, heels together at 45 degree angle, hands straight down at side
BDU	Battle Dress Uniform (Cadets wear BDU pants)
A-Team	Academy Team; comprised of quad plus one or more additional staff who oversee Cadet P- RAP Progress
Sponsor	A-Team member assigned as Cadet's primary contact for P-RAP guidance

Part 3 Character Development



Character Development

At the Wisconsin Challenge Academy, we have implemented a curriculum for Character Development to formally address issues related to Cadet's personal growth of character and to support our mission statement: *"To offer our Cadets the opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life-skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens."*

The curriculum is divided into five "phases," based on each of the five Academy Values of *Discipline, Integrity, Courage, Honor, and Commitment*. Each phase addresses topics that the Cadets have struggled with, or are likely to in the future, and these are then discussed in the context of values.

Ultimately, the goal of the Character Development curriculum is to instill in our Cadets the importance of internalizing and utilizing positive values in their everyday lives. This will have a positive effect on their beliefs, which in turn affects their thought patterns, choices, behaviors, and the consequences that determine their futures.

The core of the Character Development curriculum is presented through formal classroom instruction as a part of their daily academic

schedule. Class sections of approximately 25-30 Cadets meet five times weekly for periods of forty-four minutes each. Class topics are related to the Academy Value represented in the current phase. Several methods are utilized for instruction including discussion, videos, in-class assignments and activities, project-based learning, internet research, and role- playing. In order to maximize comprehension and involvement, opportunities for experiential activities are utilized as often as possible.

Cadets receive tri-weekly grades for Character Development, based on homework assignments and classroom participation. Many of the assignments given in Character Development class are used to fulfill requirements to evaluate Cadet's progress in several of the Eight Core Components, which Cadets must complete to qualify for graduation from the Academy.



Cadets complete at least 40 hours of service to the community. This works in conjunction with CD topics like Humility, and the concept of Pay it Forward.

In addition to the classroom portion, Character Development is taught and reinforced through other venues, including experiential events (rappelling, high ropes course, etc), service to community, academics, and many of the routine tasks Cadets complete daily. All staff, from cadre, to teachers, to administrative staff, are involved in teaching and reinforcing the Character Development lessons through daily interactions with Cadets.

To support an Academy-wide approach to teaching Character Development, staff utilizes a common language that is used throughout the curriculum and program. This includes definitions for character concepts and continuous focus on what is involved in choosing the “harder right over the easier wrong.” The curriculum begins with basic theory and concepts on character and making positive life changes, and then it evolves into more personal issues and life coping skills.

Also supporting the curriculum are a weekly quote and the Saturday night movie. The quote is used to provoke thought and discussion. The movie is used to reinforce the lessons taught during Character Development during the week, and also to assist Cadets in finding ways to identify character traits as displayed in the media and society.



Cadets are challenged to overcome their personal fears and obstacles through in class discussion and experiential learning. Rappelling down a 55 ft. wall helps earn their Platoon a streamer.

Terms and Definitions

The following terms are common language used throughout the Character Development curriculum.

Character: Having integrity to do what's right in spite of personal sacrifice.

Value: What is important to someone, what one may believe in; may be positive or negative.

Belief: A strongly held conviction, opinion, or view; what one holds to be true.

Discipline: Training that develops self-control. The willingness to do what is required regardless of personal mood.

Integrity: A strict adherence to a code of moral values or standard of conduct.

Courage: A mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

Honor: A keen sense of ethical conduct, where one's word or signature is given as a guarantee of truthfulness or performance.

Commitment: An agreement, pledge, or promise to do something in the future.

Thoughts: The words or sentences we say to ourselves, in our heads.

Feelings: An emotional state that results from our values, beliefs, and thoughts.

Behaviors: An act; what we say or do.

Consequences: What happens to us and/or others as a direct or indirect result of our behaviors; may be natural or imposed.

Thinking cycle: A framework for understanding how our beliefs and values influence our thoughts, and the subsequent feelings and behaviors which result in consequences, in relation to a given situation.

Thinking traps: These are patterns of thought which prevent us from seeing things as they really are.

Thinking traps are often deeply ingrained in our psyche.

Character Development Lessons

The following is an overview of the topics covered during each of the five phases, including the Saturday night movies. We revise our curriculum often as we learn new information and develop new ideas. As such, there may be minor changes to the curriculum your Cadet is presented,

Resilience Training: Amidst what is probably the most stressful experience for many, Cadets learn about the importance of resilience, as well as strategies for bolstering resilience during stressful times. Topics discussed include diaphragmatic breathing, imagery, energy management, positivity, goal-setting, putting negative events into the proper perspective, and mental games.

Introduction to Character Development: Cadets are given an overview of what Character Development class will entail along with the expectations for participation, behavior, and assignments.

Basic Concepts of Character: Cadets learn and discuss the definition and meaning of Character, and why it is important.

C.A.D.E.T. Model: Cadets are introduced to a problem-solving and decision-making model that will be reinforced in the future. This model teaches Cadets to connect with their problem, Analyze the problem, Decide and Plan a solution to the problem, Execute the plan, and Test to make sure it is effective. The C.A.D.E.T. Model used extensively throughout the remainder of the program with Cadets who are struggling to recognize the changes they need to make in order to be successful at the ChalleNGe Academy and in life.

The Thinking Cycle: Cadets are introduced to the Thinking Cycle and how it applies to their character, daily behavior, beliefs, and values. The Thinking Cycle is an important concept that will be revisited and reinforced throughout the Character Development Curriculum.

Thinking Traps: Cadets learn several of the major “thinking traps” that can keep us stuck in negative thinking patterns and resistant to change. Cadets are taught methods to avoid or circumvent these traps and replace them with responsible, empowering thinking patterns.

Anger and Conflict: Cadets learn about the source of anger and about positive ways to cope with feelings of anger and to productively resolve conflict. This is done through class discussion and role plays that demonstrate how anger is a natural emotion, but can be controlled and resolved through positive means.

Tolerance and Acceptance: Cadets learn the difference between tolerating and accepting others, and that they can tolerate others without agreeing with or accepting beliefs that are contrary to their own. Tolerance allows us to coexist with people of different opinions, lifestyles, religions, ethnicity, etc. That does not mean that we accept or approve or agree with it, but allows us to practice our self-discipline and integrity in order to still show respect for those who differ from ourselves.



Cadets are encouraged and expected to acknowledge, tolerate, and respect personal differences.

Respect: Through discussion, Cadets learn about the importance of showing respect towards others, even if they do not agree with them. They also learn the importance that the values of Discipline and Integrity play in demonstrating respect.

Sex and Character: Many teens engage in risky sexual behavior that can have serious negative and/or unintended consequences for themselves and others. Tying in with the previous lessons on healthy relationships, this class discusses how our society influences their decisions regarding sex, and how they can make responsible, mature choices.

STDs: Many Cadets have been, will continue to be, or will soon become involved in sexual relationships. This lesson presents the dangers of being in a sexual relationship, focusing on the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases.

Self-Assessment: Although Cadets have been exposed to goal-setting previously in the program, this week is a concentrated introduction to the Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP) process. It begins with showing Cadets how to conduct a self-assessment, where they identify their skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and resources in order to start identifying career goals.

SMART Criteria: Cadets learn that when creating goals they should be Specific, Measurable, Action-focused, Realistic, and Time-bound.

Interest Inventory/Goal Setting: What do I want to do with my life? What a great question! These lessons work together to help Cadets find career direction. First, they complete an online interest inventory, which results in a mini-career search based on the inventory answers they provide. Next, the Cadets begin to write their long-term and intermediate-term goals, including tasks to complete and obstacles to overcome.

The Golden Rule: Cadets learn about the importance of practicing the Golden Rule (Treat others as you want to be treated) in their everyday lives. They then learn more about how to apply the Golden Rule, through things such as common courtesy and random acts of kindness.

Common Courtesy: Cadets will learn and discuss common courtesies in social settings.

Healthy Relationships: Many Cadets do not have realistic views of what is required to build and maintain healthy relationships with friends, family, or boyfriends/girlfriends. They are presented with information about what influences our relationships with others, what causes relationships to fail, and how healthy relationships can help us achieve our goals. Conversely, class discussion addresses the negative consequences of being involved in unhealthy relationships and making poor decisions.

Delayed Gratification & Self-Discipline: Our Deputy Director introduces this topic by presenting on the meaning of delayed vs. immediate gratification and what it means to choose the harder right over the easier wrong. The Counselors then expand on the topic by discussing methods for practicing delayed gratification, most notably developing self-discipline and patience.

Overcoming Obstacles: Many Cadets set unrealistic goals, or goals that will be difficult to achieve, due to obstacles they will have to overcome. Cadets learn about examples of others who have overcome tremendous obstacles, as well as the need to identify specific tasks to overcome each obstacle they will face.

Telephone/Email Etiquette: Cadets are taught how to professionally communicate via the telephone and email. During the Residential Phase and beyond, most Cadets will contact potential employers, schools, etc. It is imperative that they know how to properly conduct themselves during those interactions.

Intervention: Cadets watch a couple episodes of the A&E program, which delves into drug use and its effects on the user, as well as the user's family.

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA): Two weeks is largely dedicated to teaching Cadets about this topic that presents a most significant obstacle for them in the Post-Residential Phase. The majority of Cadets used alcohol and/or drugs to some degree prior to attending the ChalleNGe Academy, and many still fail to recognize the dangers in returning to using after graduation. Those who do realize that alcohol and drug use will endanger the accomplishment of their goals fear returning to an environment after graduation where their peers (and in some cases, families) will encourage them to return to using. The focus for these lessons is to educate Cadets on the dangers of drug and alcohol use and to help them to find the courage to overcome the pressures to return to negative habits.

Taking Responsibility: Cadets watch and discuss a video that explores will vs. ability. In other words, are our behaviors, especially those considered to be negative, driven by our choices; or are there situations in which we are essentially powerless against our vices?

Body Modification: Cadets are presented with the topic of tattooing, piercing, and other forms of body modification and discuss the health risks associated with these practices, along with how using these methods to express their individuality can negatively impact their ability to achieve goals.

Technology and Character: With the explosion of social networking sites and other electronic means of communication, especially amongst teens, this lesson addresses the risks and dangers of electronic media and how to use them responsibly.

Parenting: Few Cadets are already parents, and a few more will become parents not long after leaving the Academy. Many others will become parents in the next several years. This class focuses on the responsibilities of being a parent and how becoming a parent at a young age can both inhibit Cadets from achieving their goals as well as have a negative impact on their child.

Forgiveness: This entire week focuses on the difficult topic of forgiveness. Cadets learn the importance of both forgiving those who have hurt them and asking for the forgiveness of those they have hurt as a means of letting go and repairing or improving relationships. Cadets often struggle with and resist this topic as an assignment forces them to consider strong emotions and revisit thoughts and feelings many have tried to avoid.



Cadets are forced to tackle difficult personal topics like forgiveness, participating in exercises forgiving others and asking for forgiveness themselves.

Camp Decorah: Cadets will camp for two nights, participate in fun camp activities, and participate in our time-honored Honor Road March.

Honesty and Ethics: Cadets are presented with and discuss what it truly means to be an honest person with Integrity and how, although initially difficult, practicing honesty makes our lives easier and our relationships stronger. They are also presented with a number of “Ethical Dilemmas” and discuss what they would do in several scenarios.

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Revisited: The topic of alcohol and drug use is revisited and re-emphasized as Cadets near commencement. The negative consequences of alcohol and drug use are highlighted as a self-imposed obstacle to success. Cadets have an opportunity to discuss their thoughts and fears related to drugs and alcohol as well as methods for avoidance. The topic of tobacco use and the related health risks are also addressed, as many Cadets who used tobacco prior to the Academy may choose to start again following commencement.

Resilience: Cadets will reflect on resilience skills, with a focus on refining those skills for use during P-RAP Pass and the Post-Residential Phase. In addition, Cadets will explore their character strengths, and look to build upon them for success in the future. Finally, they will create crisis plans, in order to prepare for the adversities that life will throw at them.

Work Ethics and Employability Skills: Cadets learn the specifics of what employers expect from their employees.

Interviewing Skills: In this lesson, Cadets learn proper preparation for a job interview. Each Cadet then participates in a mock job interview, for which they are critiqued and evaluated.

Saturday Movie List

Below is a list of some of the Saturday night movies we show Cadets. These movies are selected to coincide with topics taught during that week's Character Development classes. As with the lessons, the movies shown are in a state of flux as the curriculum evolves.

Eddie the Eagle

Inspired by true events, Eddie the Eagle is a feel-good story about Michael "Eddie" Edwards, an unlikely but courageous British ski-jumper who never stopped believing in himself – even as an entire nation was counting him out. With the help of a rebellious and charismatic coach, Eddie takes on the establishment and wins the hearts of sports fans around the world by making an improbable and historic showing at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics.

Gridiron Gang

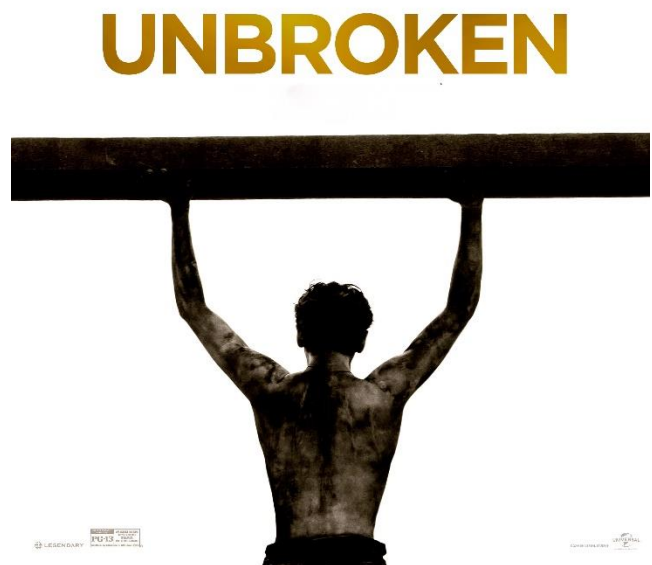
Portrays a group of young men in a juvenile detention facility. A counselor at the facility gets fed up with seeing the same kids come back again and again or end up victims of gang violence. Looking back at his own past, he decides to try to motivate the young men to move forward in their lives by establishing a football program at the facility. Cadets are encouraged to relate to the situation of learning to work as a team with others they do not know and may not like.

Unbroken

Portrays a World War II survivor, Louis volunteered for the Army before Pearl Harbor and was thrust in the violent combat of World War II as a B-24 bombardier. After his plane was shot down, he survived forty-seven days on a life raft and more than two years of torture of in POW camps. Cadets watch this movie and then discuss how the characters demonstrate determination, teamwork, and resilience.

Antwone Fisher

A young man confronts his troubled past and learns to control and overcome his propensity for anger and violence.



Remember the Titans

This is an inspirational movie about humanity and the acceptance of others. Problems we face in society (racism, prejudice, violence, etc) can be prevented when people change their values, opinions and preconceived ideas of different races, groups and individuals.

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Jack Roosevelt "Jackie" Robinson was an American Major League Baseball second baseman who became the first African American to play in the major leagues in the modern era. Robinson broke the baseball color line when the Brooklyn Dodgers started him at first base on April 15, 1947. The Dodgers, by playing Robinson, ended racial segregation that had relegated black players to the Negro leagues since the 1880s. Robinson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. This movie approaches the topics of respect and thinking that were discussed in Character Development class.

Pay It Forward

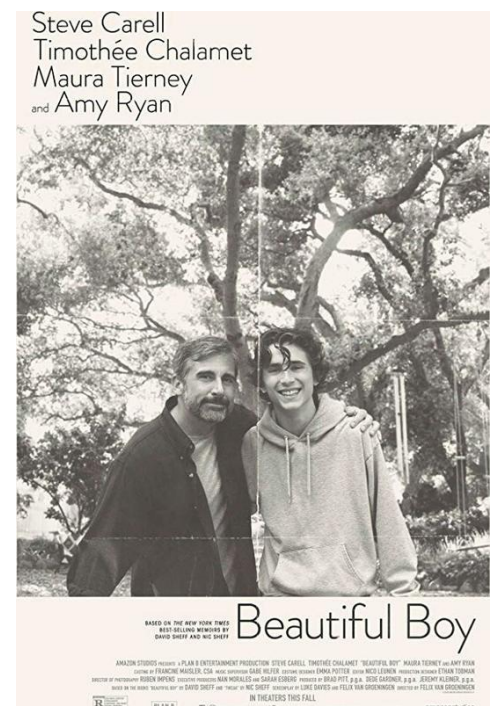
The story of a social studies teacher who gives an assignment to his junior high school class to think of an idea to change the world for the better, then put it into action. When one young student creates a plan for "paying forward" favors, he not only affects the life of his struggling single mother, but he sets in motion an unprecedented wave of human kindness which, unbeknownst to him, has blossomed into a profound national phenomenon.

I Can Only Imagine

10-year-old Bart Millard lives with his mother and abusive father Arthur in Texas. Sadly, this is when the abuse began. Bart became the focal point of his father's uncontrolled anger. Spankings gave way to full-on beatings, as Arthur found a sinister form of catharsis in laying hands on his young boy. Every time, Arthur's rage would soon give way to despair as he'd call his son into the room and apologize profusely for what he had done. Still, Bart's dad had become an irredeemable monster.

Beautiful Boy

Teenager Nicolas Sheff seems to have it all with good grades and being an actor, artist, athlete and editor of the school newspaper. When Nic's addiction to meth threatens to destroy him, his father does whatever he can to save his son and family.



Ben Is Back

Nineteen-year-old Ben Burns unexpectedly returns to his family's suburban home on Christmas Eve. Ben's mom, Holly, is relieved and welcoming but wary of her son's drug addiction. Over a turbulent 24 hours, new truths are revealed, and a mother's undying love gets put to the test as Holly does everything in her power to keep Ben clean.

Finding Forrester

This movie shows how one young man overcame obstacles in his life to achieve his goals using his relationship with a mentor as a resource and source of inspiration.

Only the Brave

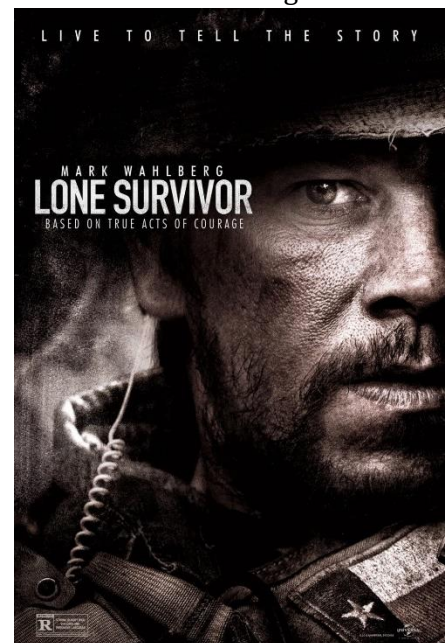
Through hope, determination, sacrifice and the drive to protect families and communities, the Granite Mountain Hotshots become one of the most elite firefighting teams in the country. While most people run from danger, they run toward it -- watching over lives, homes and everything people hold dear, forging a unique brotherhood that comes into focus with one fateful fire in Yarnell, Ariz.

Best of Enemies

This movie provides a great context for viewing forgiveness (a Character Development class earlier earlier in the week). In the movie, two outspoken activists from the same community must co-chair a community summit. In order to complete their debate, they must both forgive and move forward what is right for their community. This is the true story of the relationship between Ann Atwater, an outspoken civil rights activist, and C.P. Ellis, a local Ku Klux Klan leader during the summer of 1971, when they were forced to come together to work on the desegregation of schools in Durham, North Carolina.

Lone Survivor

In 2005 Afghanistan, Navy SEAL's Marcus Luttrell, Michael Murphy, Danny Dietz and Matthew "Axe" Axelson deploy on a mission of surveillance and to take out Taliban leader Ahmad Shah. Though spotted by goatherds, Luttrell and his team decide not to kill them. But one of the Afghans alerts a group of Taliban fighters to the invaders, and a terrible battle ensues, in which the SEAL's find themselves hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned. Finally, an Afghan villager takes the Lone Survivor in and protects him. This is a story of courage, honor, and selflessness, on the part of the SEAL's as well as the villager.



Pursuit of Happyness

This movie is shown to portray the life of a man who is faced with limitations and obstacles. It shows how determination can help someone overcome limitations by demonstrating incredible work ethic, discipline, integrity, courage, honor, and commitment to reach a goal.

In The Heart of the Sea

In 1820, crewmen aboard the New England vessel Essex face a harrowing battle for survival when a whale of mammoth size and strength attacks with force, crippling their ship and leaving them adrift in the ocean. Pushed to their limits and facing storms, starvation, panic and despair, the survivors must resort to the unthinkable to stay alive. Their incredible tale ultimately inspires author Herman Melville to write "Moby-Dick."

We Are Marshall

In 1970, Marshall University and the small town of Huntington, W.Va., reel when a plane crash claims the lives of 75 of the school's football players, staff members and boosters. New coach Jack Lengyel arrives on the scene in March 1971, determined to rebuild Marshall's Thundering Herd and heal a grieving community in the process. Grit, teamwork, and hope are at the heart of this movie.

Instant Family

A married couple decide to adopt a teenager from foster care and find out that she has two younger siblings who they would also need to take in. They go through with it, hijinks ensue, they all grow to love each other. It's a sweet premise, and Instant Family is actually based on a true story — or "inspired by a true family," as the trailer puts it.

Part 4 P-RAP: Post-Residential Action Plan



Post-Residential Action Plan

The evolution of the Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP) began with a series of benchmark meetings, production of White Papers, and samples of Promising Practices. This was in recognition that previous practices of creating a “Life Plan” and paying stipends during the Post-Residential phase were not that successful. It was determined that for a Post-Residential Action Plan to be effective, four areas needed attention.

1. **Build foundations early:** All components of the program, beginning with the application process, include education and training in goal setting and Post-Residential Action Plan development.
2. **Integrating Cadet Management:** Program curriculum and activities include Post-Residential Action Planning as an integrated component.. All staff contributes to equipping Cadet in these ways through teaching specified blocks of instruction.
3. **Extending Post-Residential Action Plan into the Post-Residential Phase:** Reinforcing the Post-Residential Action Planning process as a skill set for ongoing, long-term use enables the Cadet to adjust and adhere to the Post-Residential Actions Plan after graduation. Accountability is provided through mentors, counselors, and other Academy staff.
4. **Verifying Placement by Graduation:** Requiring Cadets to secure post-residential placement before they finish the Residential Phase offers them a smoother transition and a greater chance of success after graduation. Details around the impending placement are built into the first month plan for transition onto post-residential life.



While working on their P-RAP, Cadets are exposed to a number of opportunities, including college, employment, the trades, and military service.

P-RAP Terms & Definitions

P-RAP Working Group — Academy staff charged with the responsibility in the formation, execution, monitoring, and refinement of the P-RAP process. The working group consists of Commandant of Cadets, Lead Counselor, and the Lead Instructor. Role: The working group prepares an Action Planning Worksheet for each class cycle. The worksheet lays out over the Residential Phase of 22 weeks the sequence of the action steps to be accomplished, when it is to be accomplished, and who is the responsible proponent.

Cadet/Mentee — A youth who has completed the Pre-Challenge phase of the program is expected to formulate a Post-Residential Plan based upon a desired goal of employment, education, or military after graduation. Role: The Cadet is expected to express his or her desire, make decisions, review the plan monthly, and change the plan as needed.

Mentor — Volunteer adult, usually from the Cadet's community, nominated by the Cadet and family, trained and selected by the Academy, who demonstrates a willingness to guide, coach, and monitor a Cadet during the Residential and Post-Residential Phases of the program. A mentor is expected to provide guidance, give input, answer and ask questions, review the plan monthly, ensure changes as needed, and report to the case manager monthly.

Quad — Teams formed by Academy staff to facilitate and monitor the Cadet's progress in overall compliance of behavior, academics, and personal growth. The Quad consists of staff members representing the Cadre, Counseling, and Instructional departments. A Quad is formed for each platoon. Role: Conduct weekly assessment meetings of Cadets within their respective platoons. Assessment ratings are assigned to each Cadet of, GREEN for being compliant, AMBER for experiencing some difficulty, and RED for needing immediate attention. Each department assigns their own color assessment. A plan is developed by the Quad for corrective action to be taken by any Cadet rated RED. Deadlines are established and courses of action are taken. Recommendations are made to the Quad for those Cadets remaining in a non-compliant red status.

A-Team — Teams formed by Academy staff to facilitate and monitor the Cadet's progress in the development of their individual Post-Residential Action Plans. The A-Team consists of the existing staff members of the Platoon Quads, augmented by additional staff, to ensure a sufficient number of sponsors for each platoon. The number of staff members will vary according to the size of the platoon. The A-Team also recommends Post-Residential Assistance Grants for qualifying Cadets.

Sponsors — Cadets who have a similar goal are assigned a sponsor from the A-Team. The desired goal of the Cadet will determine which A-Team member will likely be his or her sponsor. As a norm, a Cadre sponsor may be responsible for a military interest, instructor sponsor may have education, and counseling

may have employment and Job Corps. Role: Sponsors facilitate Internet research, phone calls, home leaves connected to the P-RAP process, assign P-RAP related tasks to the Cadet, monitor and review the Cadet's progress through the Residential Phase. Vertical and horizontal communications between sponsors and A-Team members is a must to achieve the desired results of placement by graduation.

Post-Residential Assistance Grants (P-RAP Grants) — Grants are limited financial grants to assist a Cadet in his or her pursuit of their placement goal. The A-Team has the responsibility to identify and assist in the grant process. Grants are not guaranteed and may not be available for each class cycle.

Post-Residential Awards — at the end of the 12 month Post Residential Phase, the Counseling Department will select graduates to nominate for Post-Residential Awards. This is a monetary award to recognize their successful performance in the Post-Residential Phase.

In order to be eligible for this award your Graduate will need to meet the following criteria:

1. Maintained durable full-time placement for no less than six months of the Post-Residential Phase
2. Maintained (or attempted to maintain) an active match with his or her assigned mentor for the entire Post-Residential Phase
3. Has been responsive to attempted contacts by the Challenge Academy
4. Has not been charged or convicted of any legal violations (misdemeanor or felony)
5. Has demonstrated strength of character and responsible citizenship during the Post-Residential Phase by consistently practicing the Academy Values

Goal — A desired end-state or outcome.

Task — A specific step, that when completed, leads to accomplishing the objective.

S.M.A.R.T. Criteria — Used to set goals. Stands for:

- Specific; Measurable; Action-focused; Realistic; Time-bound

CADET Success Model — Used for problem solving and setting goals. Stands for:

- Connect; Analyze; Decide & Plan; Execute; Test

1st Year Goal(s) — Related to the 12-month period following your graduation from the Residential Phase.

Long Term Goal — Career goal, your dream job, vision of yourself, and what your Cadet will be doing 2-5 years after graduation.

Initial Goal — To become a successful graduate of the Challenge Academy.

Placement — The outcome of your Intermediate and Long Term Goal(s).

P-RAP Daily Pass Plan — An activity plan encompassing each day of P-RAP Pass.

2 Weeks towards Success — An activity plan encompassing the first two weeks following graduation that will set the Graduate up for Success.

Bridge Plan — A short-term plan that covers the period of time between graduation and the beginning of employment, education, military service, or vocational training.

Full-time Placement — Military, education, employment, or vocational training requires a minimum 25 hours per week or can be a combination of two part-time choices that equal 25 hours per week.

Part-time Placement — Military, education, employment, or vocational training requires a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Resources — People, organizations, individual skills or abilities, or events that can assist in the accomplishment of a goal.

“The Courage to Continue” — The Post-Residential Motto.



Cadets will work with their Sponsor in developing and getting in place their Post-Residential goals.

The P-RAP Process

The purpose of the P-RAP process is to integrate and link the staff of the Challenge Academy, A-Team/Sponsors, Mentors, and Counselors with the overall responsibility of teaching a critical set of life skills for the Cadets, assisting them in their transition from the Residential Phase into the Post- Residential Phase with the goal of successful placement by the end of the Post-Residential Phase.

Skill sets and tasks are worked on each week and throughout the Residential Phase of each class cycle. Each Academy department has the responsibility for teaching P-RAP related tasks. The P- RAP working group prepares the Action Planning Worksheet for each class cycle. Academy Platoon Quads transition into A-Teams creating a seamless effort and emphasis on placement in the Post- Residential phase.

Characteristics of the Post-Residential Action Plan

1. **Dynamic:** It changes as needed.
2. **Ongoing Process:** A living document that keeps developing, as changes are needed; continuing into the Post-Residential Phase.
3. **Easy to Evaluate:** Visual evaluation of changes in the Cadet's plans.

Teaches the Skills of Planning Through

- **Self-Assessment** --What do you want to do with your life? What are your skills? What are your gifts and talents? What do you enjoy? Self-Assessment begins with the application process. Applicants are ask to identify three career goals and to fill out a self-reflection sheet identifying their strengths, weaknesses, fears, and what they hope to learn by coming to the Challenge Academy. Throughout the Residential phase Cadets will participate in various testing instruments designed to help them assess their strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Their interests often change as they develop new skills and research new information.
- **Goal Setting** -- Using the C.A.D.E.T. Success Model and the S.M.A.R.T. Concept- What placement is best for you? Military-Employment-Education. Identify a Secondary Goal as a backup plan. Cadets will be exposed to opportunities in their related area of interest by visiting educational campuses, Job Service, Job Corps, AmeriCorps, military recruiters, conducting research on their goals through available resources. This process includes learning time management and the five steps of the C.A.D.E.T Success Model.
- **Action Planning** -- Based upon Primary and Secondary Goals- a plan of action is formed identifying the critical tasks, activities, and schedules, which will facilitate reaching those goals. Identify obstacles that may prevent a Cadet from reaching his or her goal. Continuously evaluate the plan and its progression. Where will they live? What are their transportation needs? Identify the order in which steps need to happen first, second, third, and so on.

The P-RAP Plan

Each Cadet completes a Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP) during the Residential Phase. The P-RAP outlines a Cadet's plan for the Post-Residential Phase and beyond.

Cadets receive a P-RAP Portfolio and starts the P-RAP classes during Character Development early in the Residential Phase.

Cadets must complete each of the following parts of the plan:

- Long-Term Goal – Career goal for 2-5 years after graduation
- 1st Year Goal – Career goal for the one year (12-month) Post- Residential Phase
- Community Living Plan – Living arrangements during the Post- Residential Phase
- Transportation Plan – How to get to and from places (school, work, etc.) during the Post-Residential Phase
- Transition Plan – Plan for what to do right after graduation, if their 1st Year Goal does not start right away. For example, if their 1st Year Goal is to go to school, but classes do not start until three months after graduation, their Transition Plan may be a temporary job.

Placement

For 1st Year Goals, Cadets must choose one or more of four placement options equal to “Full-time”.

Placement is defined as: “The outcome of your 1st Year and Long Term Goal(s).” Simply defined, it is what you plan to do to move towards your desired career. The placement options are:

- Employment – a job where you are paid for your work
- Education – attending classes at a college, technical school, or high school
- Military – enlisting in a branch of the U.S. military (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard)
- Vocational Training – Specialized training for a specific trade (electrician, plumber, welder, etc.)

Types of Goals

Long Term Goal

Your Cadet's vision for 2 to 5 years after graduation, their career job or dream job.

1st Year Goal(s)

1st Year Goals are those goals and tasks they will now set in place for the 12 month Post-Residential Phase. These goals will act as stepping stones connecting your Cadet toward their Long Term Goal. The outcome of this action is called Placement. Your Cadet's situation and time frames will affect what choices they will make for this goal. They only have four choices: employment, education, military, or vocational training. They may have to choose more than one to meet the full-time placement requirement.

- Example: They may choose to go to school part-time, and work part-time. They will need to plan for each.

Additionally if your Cadet chooses a full time placement with a deferred start date they will need a plan for what they are going to do during that time gap to meet placement requirements. This is called a Transition Plan.

- Example: They graduate on December 21st and with plans of going to college but classes will not start until January 21st, they will need a transition plan for the month time gap. Generally Cadet's will choose to find employment.

Initial Goal

"To become a successful Challenge Academy graduate."

Your Cadet will have already started this Goal. They began by writing down some goals in their application packet. They have identified objectives and tasks related to this goal. They will continue to develop objectives and tasks related to the 8 Core Components during the Residential Phase. (Academic Excellence, Job Skills, Health & Hygiene, Leadership/Followership, Physical Fitness, Responsible Citizenship/Character Development, Life Coping Skills, and Service to the Community).

This provides them the opportunity to set and clearly see goals, objectives and tasks and hopefully to build on success as they accomplish them. Objectives they accomplish during the Residential Phase can eliminate or reduce some of their obstacles. Elimination of obstacles will allow them to set more ambitious 1st Year and Long Term Goal.

The P-RAP Document

Your Cadet will be working on their Post-Residential Action Plan using a form like the one below.



Post-Residential Action Plan

Cadet: _____

Your Initial Goal- To become a successful Challenge Academy graduate.



Long-Term Goal

What do you picture yourself doing as a career in 2-5 years?

1st Year Goal

What will you be doing as a full-time (25+hrs/week) occupation in the first year after graduating from the Academy?

Your Plan: Check all that apply, then write your full goal using SMART.

<input type="checkbox"/> Working	<input type="checkbox"/> Back in HS	<input type="checkbox"/> College/Tech School
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	Other:
Explain:		

Backup Plan: Check all that apply, then write your full goal using SMART.

<input type="checkbox"/> Working	<input type="checkbox"/> Back in HS	<input type="checkbox"/> College/Tech School
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	Other
Explain:		

Does your 1st Year Goal help you reach your Long-Term Goal?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Once graduated, when do you plan to start work, school, or military?



Look at your 1st Year Goal on the previous page; what have you already done to reach it?

- ---
- ---
- ---

What do you still need to do have it in place by graduation?

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

When would you like to have everything on your list checked off by? *You can write a specific date or a week of the program.*

Your Obstacles



Think realistically about life back home. What are some things that could get in the way of you being successful and reaching your 1st Year Goal and continuing with it?

Personal Issues/Home Life *(Check all that apply)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Laziness	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Motivation
<input type="checkbox"/> Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Girl/Boyfriend Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Issues/Fines	<input type="checkbox"/> Living Situation	<input type="checkbox"/> Drugs/Alcohol Use
<input type="checkbox"/> No License/Vehicle	Other: _____	

Explain your obstacles and how you can overcome them:

Example: I am not 18 yet and my parents will not sign for me to join the military. I will wait until I turn 18 to join. In the mean time I will get a job, stay sober, and work with a recruiter.

Obstacle #1	
Obstacle #2	
Obstacle #3	
Other:	

Your Resources



Think about your 1st Year Goal. What are some things already in place that can help you reach them?

Describe the resources that can help you reach your goal.

Examples: Already having a car or license; having a Mentor that can help you land a job; having a supportive family, etc.

Resource #1	
Resource #2	
Resource #3	
Other:	



Where will you be living after you graduate from the Academy?

<input type="checkbox"/> With Parents/Family	<input type="checkbox"/> With Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> On Your Own
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Other/Don't Know

Explain:

What have you already done to have your Living Plan in place?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What do you still need to do?

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



What type of transportation will be available to you after you graduate?

<input type="checkbox"/> Your Own Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Rides From Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Rides From Friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Transportation	Other	

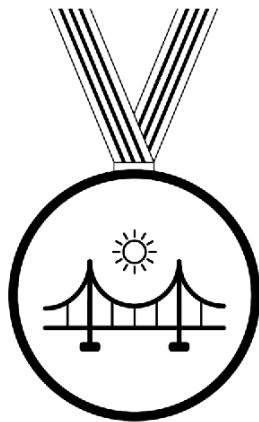
Explain:

Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Have Temp License	<input type="checkbox"/> Have Valid License	<input type="checkbox"/> Suspended License
<input type="checkbox"/> Have a Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Have Auto Insurance	

What do you still need to do to have reliable transportation in place by graduation?

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



Is your 1st Year Goal part-time (less than 25 hours/week)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Is there a month or more gap from graduation to the start of your goal? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "Yes" to either question you are going to need a Transition Plan. This should be a full-time or second part-time job.

Your Transition Plan: Write your full plan below using the SMART Criteria.

Plan:	

The checklist below will help you reach your plan. Check off each step as you complete it. Your sponsor will initial to verify you've completed each step.

- | | <i>Sponsor
Initial</i> |
|---|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 1 Get to know your strengths and weaknesses. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 2 Create your resume and cover letter. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 3 Create a positive network: references and social media. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 4 Research job opportunities and companies. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 5 Apply for jobs. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 6 Prepare for interviews. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 7 Attend interviews. Follow up via phone or email if needed. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 8 Accept job offer. | _____ |

Part 5 Tips for Success & Resources



Mental Preparation

Your Cadet has taken up the challenge to make positive changes in their lives! This is good news, but the next few weeks will be a stressful time for them. This is likely their first time away from home; they will have to ask permission to do everything; they will have to follow orders at all times; and they will not be able to use most of their at-home coping strategies (listening to music, going for a walk, calling a friend, etc.).

Your Cadet will likely experience frustration, stress, anger, withdrawal, fear, anxiety, homesickness, among other emotions. These natural and normal emotions will cause many to want to quit or give up. They will look to you to “rescue” them from these uncomfortable feelings and emotions. It will be imperative for you to remain committed for them.

Be prepared for a phone call from staff: If your Cadet states they want to go home, we do our best to convince them otherwise. If we are not successful we reach out to parents. This call may occur on the first day, after 2 weeks, or not at all. Take some time to think about what you could say to ease their concerns and motivate them to stay.



Communicating With Your Cadet

Letter Writing

1. **All** Cadets look forward to Mail Call, which is conducted each day that mail is delivered to Fort McCoy. As Cadets go through the 22-week residential phase of the Challenge Academy, it is important they receive regular, if not daily, support from family and friends by way of letter correspondence.
2. We ask that the correspondence you have with your Cadet be uplifting and positive in nature so that your Cadet remains focused on the difficult job at hand. Do not distract your Cadet with unnecessary worries and concerns.
 - a. If you do have bad news that may affect their performance at the Challenge Academy, please call a Challenge Academy Counselor before you notify you're Cadet. This will allow us to better support your Cadet with the difficult news. The Counseling Department can also help in facilitating hard conversations in a private setting. Counselor can be reached Monday-Friday by calling 608-269-3634
3. During the residential phase, send all correspondence to the Challenge Academy. Do not send certified letters this actually delays delivery. You may write to your Cadet at the following address:

Candidate/Cadet _____ *[Last name, First Name]*
___ Platoon, Company ___ *[Company/Platoon assigned after Pre-Challenge]*
Wisconsin Challenge Academy
749 East 12th Ave
Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5248

4. Cadets can only receive letters, appropriate photos, and post cards.
5. Do not send any sort of consumable goods or other packages. The best care packages Cadets can receive are letters. The Challenge Academy staff greatly encourages letters from family members and relatives.
6. Do not mail your Cadet any of the following items:
 - Money, checks, money orders, ect.
 - Inappropriate pictures: representations/glamorization of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs/paraphernalia; anything gang-related; or depictions of lewd behavior.
 - Non-religious magazines or books.
 - Pens, pencils, or markers.
 - Stationary or notebooks.
 - Jewelry
7. The Challenge Academy may examine mail if contraband is suspected.
8. At no time are Cadets allowed to receive incoming telephone calls or emails.

Tips for Writing your Cadet:

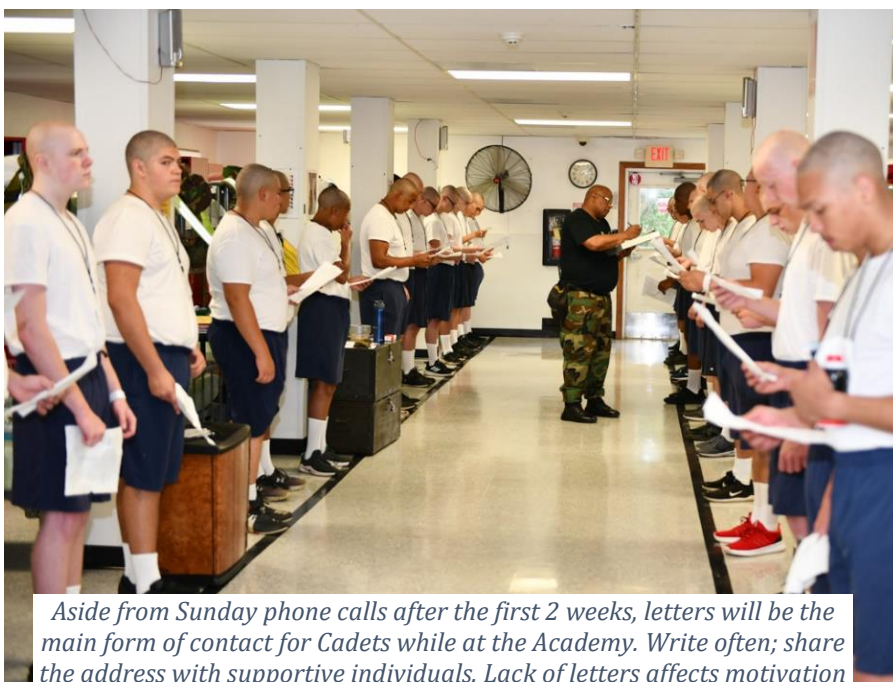
Write often: E-letters (www.challengeAcademy.org/letters) were implemented to help candidates make it through the first 2 weeks. They need to feel a connection with their loved ones. Write them often, always be supportive, share stories of your day to day activities. Share the link so others can write as well.

Don't share bad news over letters: The first few weeks are an emotional time. If there is news that will significantly and negatively affect your candidate, don't share it over letters. Instead contact the Academy so a Counselor can facilitate a phone call.

Don't panic if you receive a bad letter: Moods change day to day. Let's say your Cadet is having a bad Monday. They send a letter saying how much they're struggling and that they want to quit. The letter may arrive to you on Friday. By that time their issues have likely been resolved on their own. Regardless, write them back. You don't need to step in and "rescue" them right away. They are in a safe, controlled environment. Candidates need time and space to work through their struggles and attempts by parents to help too much, too quickly, limit their growth.

Suggested Writing Topics:

- Share with them why you are proud of them
- Remind them often that what they are doing is a big deal and takes courage
- Ask them about their aspirations, future plans, and concerns for the future
- Ask them if they have started to think about their career options, joining the military, going to college, and or traveling.
- Share how you can support them in reaching their goals
- On different occasions ask them what they have learned about themselves
- As you notice their growth and character development thought out the program share that with them



Aside from Sunday phone calls after the first 2 weeks, letters will be the main form of contact for Cadets while at the Academy. Write often; share the address with supportive individuals. Lack of letters affects motivation and distracts from the tasks at hand.

Phone Calls

1. Beginning on the third Sunday, Cadets will start to make weekly phone calls. Calls will occur each Sunday generally between the hours of 1730 (5:30 p.m.) and 2030 (8:30 p.m.).
2. Cadets are allowed to make one outgoing telephone call per week and this call will be approximately 5 minutes in length.
3. Cadets are allowed to call whomever they choose. Calls are never withheld from Cadets as a form of punishment. If your Cadet is not calling you they maybe choosing to call someone else. Please reach out to the Counseling Department with any questions or concerns related to phone calls.
4. If no one is available when your Cadet calls, they are not given another opportunity to call again until the next week.
5. Candidates won't receive their first phone call until the third Sunday after arrival at the Challenge Academy.

Tips for the first phone call:

- ***Be Supportive.*** Encourage them. Remind them about their future and urge them to think about what is required to have a successful future. (HSED, Physical Fitness, Military, College, Employment, etc.)
- ***Remain calm in your conversations.*** It is very easy to get caught up in an argument with your teen.
- ***Listen and be understanding.*** It will be hard for you to identify with the stress and challenges they are encountering, but show an interest and understanding with what they are experiencing.
- ***Know that change will not happen overnight.*** Be patient with your son or daughter. Change is an ongoing process and it will take time for them to adjust and change.
- ***Be firm, be confident, and don't give in!*** Remember that they are probably begging you to come get them! Be firm with them about the decision they made to come to the Challenge Academy. Allowing them to give up just reinforces that it's alright to quit other things in their life (jobs, school, relationships, marriages, etc.

Tips for Effective Communication

Remain calm: This may be easier said than done, especially when a person is screaming, making threats, or using abusive language. Remember that they are beginning to lose control and if you also lose control, the situation will probably get worse. Try to keep your cool.

Privacy is key: Onlookers, especially peers or other family members tend to fuel the fire. In addition, the presence of an audience makes it more difficult for the person to back down, for fear of losing face in front of others. You will be more effective one on one than in a group setting.

Watch your body language: As a person becomes increasingly agitated, they will pay less attention to your words and more attention to your body language. Be aware of your use of space, posture, and gestures. Make sure your nonverbal behavior is consistent with your verbal message.

Keep it simple: Be clear and direct in your message. Avoid jargon and complicated choices. A person who is beginning to lose control will not be processing information as well as they usually do.

Use reflective questioning: Put the person's statements in your own words and then check with them to see if you have understood what they meant. This is a powerful way to let the person know that you care enough to listen carefully to their words.

Use silence: Surprisingly, silence is a very effective verbal intervention technique. Silence on your part allows them time to clarify their thoughts and restate their message. This often leads to valuable insight and clearer understanding of the true source of their conflict.

Watch your paraverbals: Paraverbal communication refers to the tone, volume, and cadence (rate and rhythm) of your speech. Many identical statements can have completely opposite meanings, depending on your paraverbals. "How you say what you say"

Practice Attentive Listening: Active listening involves listening with all senses. It is the practice of observing the verbal and non-verbal message and providing appropriate feedback.

- Listen without interrupting
- Make eye contact
- Ask to repeat or clarify
- Show interest with facial expression and body language
- Understand and acknowledge feelings: e.g. "that sounds embarrassing"
- Avoid put downs and criticisms
- Use "door openers": e.g. "I'd like to hear about it" "tell me more" "what do you think about."

Tips for Effective Communication

Other Tips for Communicating with Your Cadet

- Listen, don't lecture, don't argue
- Talk with them in a respectful way
- Avoid comparisons with a sibling, peers, family ect.
- Laugh together. Make some time for fun together at least once a week
- Encourage problem solving. Instead of blaming each other, identify the problem and some possible solutions. Encourage teens to solve problems. Discuss and evaluate some possible solutions together. Give them your active support.
- Learn something new together. Your Cadet may have considerable expertise that may benefit you! Share your knowledge and skills when your teen shows interest!

Verbal Intervention Tips and Techniques

Do	Don't
Remain calm: We teach our Cadets that when you are angry it is not the time to have an important discussion.	Overreact: This can lead to pushing them further away and harm your relationship long-term. Think: was the behavior that bad, or am I reacting like this because they didn't listen?
Isolate the situation: Have a one-on-one discussion. This discussion should not be had around friends or siblings, unless they are directly involved. Focus on the topic at hand.	Get in a power struggle: If emotions are running high and both parties are not in a state to have a reasonable discussion, disengage. Set a clear boundary and enforce it if needed.
Enforce limits: Your credibility and respect is decreased every time a limit or rule is broken without consequences.	Make false promises: Don't make rules or set boundaries that you can't or know you won't enforce. These are usually threats, and not limits.
Listen: What they have to say is as important as your opinion. Communication builds trust and respect.	Fake attention: Your Cadet is smart and can tell when you are not being genuine in a conversation. Tune in.
Be aware of non-verbal's: If you are saying all the right words but your facial expressions are saying something else, there will be issues.	Be threatening: Threats do not work. Breathe. If you are unable to discuss without your emotions dominating the conversation, disengage.

Communication Blocks

Half of “good” communication is avoiding “bad” communication. Communication blocks are statements that not only block effective communication but also interfere with the development of your Cadet’s problem solving skills.

The sender intends the message to be helpful; but the receiver perceives the message as disrespectful, not helpful and perhaps uncaring. In short, communication blocks STOP effective communication.

Although we want to help our Cadet make appropriate decisions, Cadets who hear a communication blocker will be unreceptive to our suggestions.

Examine the following communication blocks to discover which ones you use frequently. Most of us specialize in two or three! By identifying them we can learn to reduce or eliminate them from our conversations.

Block	Example	Message Teens May Receive
Advising or suggesting	“Why don’t you...” “You should...” “You would be best to...” etc	You don’t have the ability to devise your own solutions.
Denying feelings	“Don’t worry...” “Everything will work out okay” “You don’t need to be so upset”	You shouldn’t feel the way you do feel.
Sarcasm or ridiculing	“That must have been the worst experience anyone’s ever had: (Tone of voice is important)	Your problems are insignificant and really don’t matter to me.
Changing the subject or distracting	e.g. “Don’t worry about that “Let’s go and get a video”	Your problems aren’t all that important.
Questioning	“What exactly did you do?”	You must have done something wrong – you are to blame for the situation.
Ordering or commanding	“You must...” “You need to ...”	You think that I can’t solve my own problems.

Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are habits that get in the way of good parenting communication. These include:

Labeling and belittling. Saying things like, "What do you know? You're just a kid!" or "You're a disappointment to me." "You haven't changed!" This paves the way for total lack of communication.

Ordering, prescribing and lecturing. Saying things like, "Do it because I said so" or "Stop feeling sorry for yourself." This leads to, no one being heard, leaving everyone angry and nothing gets solved.

Filibustering. This is when you take the conversation and run with it, silencing everyone else.

Taking over the problem is making your Cadet's problem yours, habitually overreacting and leading your Cadet afraid to tell you anything.

Mixed messages. This can be encouragement with negative undertones. Saying "It's good you fixed it but you shouldn't have put yourself in that situation in the first place."

Try breaking these bad emotional habits. Being there for your Cadet and listening with empathy and love to break down these barriers.

Talking so you're Cadet Will Listen

One of the most important ways to encourage your Cadet to listen to you is to listen to them. Show interest in their feelings and opinions, even when you disagree. This helps to build trust and mutual respect.

Secondly, give clear messages. Express your feelings and needs directly. Giving a clear message may mean saying, "I feel hurt when you're not honest with me", instead of "You're a liar". Let your Cadet know how his behavior affects you, instead of judging them intrinsically good or bad. Be sure to catch him doing something right whenever possible and praise him.

A third point, respect each other's separateness. Do you want your Cadet to be the best they can be, or the best you want? There is a difference, and knowing this difference can aid communication.

Finally, set limits. Let your Cadet know what your unbreakable rules are. At the same time, let them make an increasing number of minor decisions. Give each other a chance. Your communication can improve, starting today!

Communication Consequences

When speaking to your Cadet after they have made a poor choice, how you communicate is often more important than what you say. Words should be carefully chosen to be instructive, not destructive, and caring, not callous. This communicates a kind of respect that your son or daughter is more likely to respond to.

Bringing up past transgressions usually does more harm than good. Never say things such as “You’re just like you were before,” or “You haven’t changed a bit.” Focus on the here and now and use the past in a constructive manner, not to make a hurtful point.

Tips:

- Stay Calm – don’t start the discussion if you aren’t ready. It can wait until you are.
- Focus on your son/daughter – look directly at him or her.
- Praise good behavior whenever you get the chance.
- Use gentle reminders – “I noticed you didn’t clean up your dishes this morning.”
- Offer choices when possible – “If you are not going to follow the curfew we set, you are going to have to find your own place to live.” This is only effective if you are willing to follow through.
- Don’t Ask, Tell – Instead of “Can you wash the dishes?” say “Do the dishes, please.” Make sure to establish a deadline. “I’d like them done before you leave for work.”
- Invite Input – Ask your son or daughter what he or she thinks would be a good consequence or a good way to solve the problem. You’d be surprised at how hard they can be on themselves. Use their ideas and yours to come up with a compromise.
- Use “I” instead of “You” – “You” statements usually put others on the defensive without listening to what’s being said. “I” statements help to put more focus on the behavior being addressed. Instead of “You make me angry when you come home so late” try “I don’t appreciate it when you miss curfew, because I stay up late worrying.”
- Don’t overwhelm them – Address one thing at a time. If you try to discuss many things at once, you will get shut out and not get anywhere.

How to Handle a Crisis Call

It is very likely that your Cadet will want to go home in the first 2 weeks. This is a normal response that most people would feel. The top reasons that candidates decide they want to quit are homesickness and inability to cope with a structured/restricted environment. Most are able to ride out these issues, but some struggle to the point where staff have to reach out to parents. Below is a guide on how to handle a crisis call.

1. **Game Plan.** You know your Cadet best. Think about what strategy would work best for them. Some people respond well to a soft approach, others respond better to a more direct “buck up” approach. Plan to use the strategy that will best motivate them to continue. (Refer to the purple sheet.)
2. **Ask Questions.** Candidates often have a difficult time explaining why it is that they want to quit. Ask them direct questions like:

- What is it that you’re struggling with? What’s hard for you right now? What happened that is making you want to come home?

If your Cadet is not able to give a clear reason, it usually means they are just homesick. They may attempt to game the situation by telling you “I’ll tell you when you come pick me up”.

3. **Listen and validate.** Your Cadet is having a hard time, acknowledge this. Empathize with them and make them feel heard. Allow them to vent. Remind them that their feelings are normal and remind them that you would feel the same way if you were in their shoes. Tell them you believe in them and they are capable, but do not tell them that this is easy.
4. **Talk, don’t argue.** Take turns talking. Try your best to stop yourself from falling back into a habit of arguing with them. This will not be helpful.
5. **Reassure them.** Your Cadet likely feels disconnected from family, especially if they haven’t been receiving e-letters. They may be feeling abandoned and unloved. Tell them how much you and other family/friends miss and think about them. If you haven’t been sending e-letters, assure them you will begin to.
6. **Time will help.** Remind your Cadet that everything gets easier with time. They need to allow time to adjust to their new “home”. This process can take weeks but the days will get easier.
7. **What is their Why?** Ask your Cadet why they came to the Academy. Remind them what they’ve tried in the past that hasn’t worked (school, alternative programs, their habits, etc.). Remind them what they have to gain by completing the program and how that will help them reach their future goals. If they have a specific motivation (like proving someone wrong), use that as fuel.

How to Handle a Crisis Call (continued)

8. **Remind them they made a commitment.** Remind your Cadet what they agreed to when they signed up for the program. They will likely say “but I didn’t know it’d be like this”. Assure them that it will get easier with time and they gave their word. You may offer to revisit their request to come home at a later time.
9. **When all else fails.** If your Cadet still says that they want to go home and you do not agree with their request, you can agree to disagree. Tell them that they have not given the program enough time. As their legal guardian you are unwilling to withdraw them and would like them to continue. You may tell them you can discuss this at a later time.
 - At this point they are likely very frustrated and agitated. They may resort to threats and insults. See purple sheet for tips.



Setting Boundaries and Limits after the Academy

Reasons Why Rules May Have Been Ineffective In The Past...

Reason #1: Your Cadet Has Literal-itis: Teenagers are extremely literal and will continue to get into arguments about the interpretation of rules or consequences. Therefore, rules and consequences must be clearly stated and defined.

Reason #2: Rules Optional, Not Mandatory: If the rule is not clearly stated, it becomes optional and ineffective.

Reason #3: Too Many Rules at One Time: Focus time and energy on the most important issues, instead of correcting every negative thing your Cadet does at one time.

Reason #4: Rules Not Predetermined: If the rules and consequences are not predetermined it will cause confusion as to what was said and how the rule was to be enforced.

Reason #5: Be Consistent: Try to avoid changing rules and consequences frequently, create a standard of expectations with you Cadet.

Properly Setting Limits

Setting limits is one of the most powerful tools to promote positive behavior change for your Cadet. Knowing there are limits on their behavior helps your Cadet feel safe. It also helps them learn to make appropriate choices.

Part of the reason your Cadet is able to be successful at the Academy is because there are clear rules, limits, and consequences for doing the wrong things. These rules are reviewed and discussed during the first 2 weeks. Once they know what the rules are, they are expected to follow them and held accountable.

Every time a rule is broken, direct consequences follow. Letting a behavior “slide” leads to confusion, hurts the relationship, takes away credibility, and makes it more difficult for that rule to be enforced. This is especially true as other Cadets are watching how we respond to situations. The same way that your kids watch and are affected by how their siblings are treated. Consistency is key.

We have levels of offenses in the Disciplinary Code Cadets are expected follow. As offenses increase in severity, so do the consequences. The consequences should always be in-line with their actions.

Setting Boundaries and Limits after the Academy

Sample Action and Consequences at the Academy	
Action	Potential Consequence
Talking out of turn	Push-ups
Disrespecting staff	Be seen by the disciplinary board, assigned corrective action/loss of privileges
Physical violence towards others	Potential dismissal from the program

As they return home, it's important to set clear rules and expectations. This is best done before they're back under your roof. A good time to have this discussion would be over one of the home passes, during a Sunday phone call, or as a last resort, during the car ride home.

Setting these rules should be a discussion, not you telling them what's what like you expect a drill sergeant to do. Your relationship with your Cadet is complex as you are their guide to adulthood. Make them an active part of setting the rules. Ask them what they feel the rules should be and the consequences. You'd be surprised how open they are to having more structure.

Tips for Setting Limits:

Be Simple and Clear: Explain what the behavior is and why the behavior is inappropriate

Be Enforceable: Always follow through with consequences

Be Reasonable: Give reasonable choices and consequences

Allow Time: Give them time to reflect and respond, really listen to what they have to say

Setting a limit is not the same as issuing an ultimatum.

Limits aren't threats. Limits offer choices with consequences.

- If you don't attend school, your weekend privileges will be suspended
- If you attend school and follow the other steps in your plan, you'll be able to attend all of the special activities this weekend
- If you don't attend school, then you'll have to stay behind. It's your decision.

The purpose of limits is to teach, not to punish.

- Through limits, people begin to understand that their actions, positive or negative, result in predictable consequences and it is their choice.
- By giving such choices and consequences, you provide a structure for good decision making.

Setting limits is more about listening than talking.

- Taking the time to really listen will help you better understand their thoughts and feelings.
- By listening, you will learn more about what's important to them, and that will help you set more meaningful limits.

Peer Pressure

- It's natural for teen to rather be with their friends/peers
- You are not a buddy, friend, or pal.
 - Give Guidance
 - Set Rules
 - Expect them to fight you on these – they are teenagers
- Get to know their friends
 - Encourage them to hang out with the ones you like
 - Set rules on what they can do with the rest
- Make your home a Friendly Haven
- Always be available to talk
- If someone refers to peer pressure, it indicates that they are being influenced to do something they would otherwise not choose to do.
- The best way to avoid pressure from peers is to give them the confidence to remove the source of the pressure.

Dealing with Peer Pressure

Gaining Independence

- Your Cadet may believe he or she deserves independence since coming to the Challenge Academy because they have lived “away from home” for the past 5 months. This is not necessarily the case. At the Academy, they were given opportunities to practice what they will experience in the “real world,” but they didn’t actually experience it. Their lives were scheduled, supervised, and consequences were immediate – not anything like the real world.
- Most Cadets, though many do not admit it, are afraid of facing the future after the Academy. They are afraid of failure, afraid of adulthood, and afraid of losing friends and being alone. Many Cadets tell us they do not want to leave because they know life at the Academy is easier than facing all the pressures, expectations, and choices that await them at home.

Warning signs that their friends may be negatively impacting goals and behavior:

- They would rather spend time at friends’ houses than at home.
- You invite their friends over for dinner or other activities so you can meet them, but they make excuses or don’t want you to meet their friends.
- They repeatedly miss the curfews you set.
- Their personal appearance is oriented towards impressing their friends, or is largely neglected.

Tips for Dealing with Drug Use

When it comes to teen drug use, an ounce of prevention is worth so much more than a pound of cure.

Parents of adolescents face a tough dilemma about substance use: we may want our children to be abstinent, but what do we do if they are not? While parents can and should communicate clearly that non-use is the best decision for health, we simply can't control every aspect of young people's lives. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to successful dialogue with teens about substance use, but these principles may be helpful.

Make your values and your rules clear: Phrases like "be smart" or "make good decisions," may have very different meanings to different people. For example, if you say "Be smart!" when your Cadet is going out with friends, and you're thinking they will understand that means don't drink, but the Cadet may interpret the instructions as, "Don't drink enough to black out." So, be specific. If you mean, "You can go out with your friends as long as you can assure me you will not use marijuana," then say it that way.

Ask and listen, but resist the urge to lecture: As adults we very much want to impart as much wisdom as we can to help young people avoid the same mistakes that we made. But, it is probably more useful to draw out their innate curiosity and encourage them to seek out answers on their own. Consider beginning by asking a question like, "Tell me, what you know about marijuana?" Teens who feel like their point of view is valued may be more willing to engage in a conversation. In response to what your Cadet says, use nonjudgmental reflective statements to make sure they feel listened to, then follow up with a question. For example: "So you've heard that marijuana is pretty safe because it is natural. Do you think that is correct?" You don't need to agree with everything your teen says; you just need to make it clear you are listening.

If your Cadet has used substances, try to explore the reasons: Teens may use substances to help manage anxiety, relieve stress, distract from unpleasant emotions, or connect socially with peers. Being curious about those reasons can help him feel less judged. It may also give you a window into your teen's underlying struggles, help them develop insight into their own behavior, and point to problems that may need professional support. On the other hand, these conversations may be challenging for a parent to have with a Cadet, and some young people have limited understanding as to why they use substances. For adolescents who are using substances regularly, we recommend an assessment by a professional who can support them in behavior change.

Have the hard conversations: When you notice they are headed in an unhealthy direction address it early. Remember these are conversations, not lectures.

Get to know your Cadet's friends: encourage them to spend time with those who have similar goals. "Show me your friends and I'll show you, you're future."

Tips for Dealing with Drug Use

Know when (and how) to intervene: Engaging with adolescents on the topic of substance use can be a delicate dance. We want to encourage openness and honesty, and we also want them to get clear messages that help to keep them safe. Teens who use substances recurrently and/or who have had a problem associated with substance use may be on a trajectory for developing a substance use disorder. It is a good idea for them to have a professional assessment. If an assessment is warranted, you can start with your pediatrician, who can help refer you to a specialist as necessary.

Be mindful of any family history of substance use disorders: Much of the underlying vulnerability to developing substance use disorders is passed down genetically. Exposure to substance use in the home is also a major risk factor. Both may affect children with a first- or second-degree relative (like a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle) with a substance use disorder. While we know from studies that the genetic heritability of addiction is strong, it is also complex, passed on through a series of genes and generally not limited to a single substance. In other words, children who have a relative with an opioid use disorder may themselves develop a cannabis or sedative use disorder. Honest conversations about unhealthy substance use, addiction, and the family risk of substance use disorders can help provide teens a good, solid reason for making the smart decision not to start using in the first place.

Be there for your Cadet when they need to get out of a bad situation: Be the one who will pick up your Cadet without repercussions if they find themselves in an unhealthy situation.

Encourage them to stay busy: Support them in getting involved in extracurricular healthy activities. Schools offer sports or clubs and community organizations offer classes and youth groups. These will help them mold their identity in a positive way and give them less time doing nothing and becoming bored. Studies have shown teens that have less time to just hang out are less likely to do drugs.

Keep connected when you know they have free time: Reach out to them when you know they have free time. Help them establish a routine for down time or unscheduled time. Connect with your Cadet by doing things together. Schedule routine outings and have your Cadet help plan it.

Drop any baggage you may be carrying: Don't allow their past mistakes or the mistakes you made in the past influence your Cadet in a negative way. Tap into the mature adult you've become and are guiding them to become; let the past go. Discuss mistakes with them so they may learn from them but don't place blame.

Be a role model: They will look to friends and family for acceptable behavior. If you abuse drugs or alcohol, it will be difficult to ask them to not do the same. "Do as I say, not as I do" is often viewed as hypocrisy by teens. If you drink, drink responsibly. If you do illegal drugs, know that they are watching and may follow in your footsteps.

14 Tips for Raising Teens (By Evelyn Petersen)

1. **Let them know you are willing to just listen.** Listen to their ideas without making judgments. Talking is a way they think things out.
2. **Be accessible.** Teens often blurt things out or want to talk at strange or inconvenient times. Be ready to listen anytime, anywhere.
3. **Use questions sparingly.** Resist the urge to know EVERYTHING your teen is thinking or planning. Show some trust; you would expect the same.
4. **Try not to be defensive.** When they make generalizations or critical remarks, don't take them personally. They are opportunities for discussion.
5. **Give straight forward advice or feedback on important issues** such as sex, drinking and drugs, but don't keep repeating it. They need to hear you and they do hear you, even if they pretend indifference.
6. **Talk about yourself sometimes instead of the teen.** They hate to be the only topic under discussion. Tell them about your own teen memories and mistakes.
7. **Set up and use family meetings to full advantage.** Get input from each person on rules, curfews, etc. as well as on the consequences of breaking rules. Sign agreements, try them out; modify as needed.
8. **Show intimacy.** Teens are still kids inside; they need the warm feelings of belonging that come from good touches and hugs.
9. **Give lots of praise and positive feedback.** Teens need to hear the "good stuff" just like the rest of us. They need to know you love them for who they are inside, as well as what they can do.
10. **Give them responsibilities with every privilege;** that's real life.
11. **Teach them to make decisions** and make them accept the consequences of each choice they make.
12. **Teach them to deal with information.** Teach them to think critically about what they see or hear, as well as how to sort out and prioritize information.
13. **Take time to relax and have fun.** Teens need to learn positive ways to manage stress; enjoying each other will build lifetime relationships.
14. **Make them earn what they want,** and know the difference between wants and needs. Instant gratification does not teach life skills.

Supporting your Cadet when they seem to be Underachieving

At times Cadets choose to underachieve because it gives them a sense of control and power, and eliminates the anxiety of failure. A large part of underachieving has to do with managing other people's expectations. That's because once you start to achieve, people expect more of you. Cadets feel this quite powerfully and they don't have much defense against it. Sometimes when people start expecting more of them, they fall apart.

When this happens it is important help them by coaching them to meet those responsibilities in spite of their anxiety, fear or apathy. Below are additional ways to support your Cadet.

Look at What Your Cadet Likes: Look for things that can be used as rewards for your Cadet. Make a point of observing what your Cadet likes and enjoys now. And don't take their word for it; they'll tell you they don't care about anything; that "nothing matters." But look at their actions—if they watch a lot of TV, play on the computer, if they like video games or texting, you know what they like. Ask yourself: do they like going to the movies? Do they like going fishing? Do they like taking walks? Take an inventory of the things they enjoy and write it all down on a piece of paper. Later, you can use these things as incentives.

Take the Goodies out of Their Room: Underachieving Cadets should not have a lot of goodies in their rooms. Look at it this way: their room is just a place for them to withdraw. If you have a Cadet who holes up in their bedroom, the computer should be in the living area—and if they're going to use it, they should be out there with other people. They also shouldn't have a TV or video games in their room, and if they're not performing, don't let them have their cell phone, either.

It's important to realize that there's a difference between being motivated to do nothing and being completely withdrawn. A Cadet who won't attend to their work or do their chores is different from someone who's depressed. If your Cadet won't come out of their room, doesn't seem to care no matter what you take away, and is often isolated and withdrawn, you have to take that seriously and seek professional help. Talk to their doctor.

Have Conversations about What Your Cadet Wants: When times are good, you should talk to your Cadet about what they would like to have some day. Try to sneak in different ideas to get your Cadet to think about how they will achieve what they want in life. When you notice that they are untrack to reach even small goals, acknowledge it. That recognition can become their motivation. Help them see that completing their responsibilities is in their best interests, because it leads to the life they'd like to have in the future.

Supporting your Cadet when they seem to be Underachieving

Don't Shout, Argue, Beg or Plead: If you're shouting, you're showing your frustration not support.

"It Matters to Me." Be very clear and tell your Cadet that what they do matters. Personalize it by saying, "It matters to me. I care about you. I want you to do well. I can't make you do it and I won't force you. But it matters to me and I love you."

Saying "It matters to me," doesn't mean you should take it personally. Taking something personally means believing that your Cadet's inappropriate behavior is directed at you. It's not—in reality, it's their overall strategy to deal with the stresses of life. The concept of "It Matters to Me" helps because relationships can be motivating, but your Cadet is their own person. It's no reflection on you if they don't want to perform. You just have to set up the scenario and enhance the probability that they're going to do what they need to do. But don't take it personally, as if somehow you have to make them do it. The truth is, you can't.

Stop Doing Your Cadet's Tasks for them: "Learned helplessness" is when people learn that if they don't do something, someone will step in and do it for them—and it's a very destructive pattern. When kids and teens use this shortcut, they don't learn independence. In fact, in families where this occurs, many times you'll find that the kids weren't allowed to be independent very much. Perhaps they had to do things a certain way and all the choices were made for them.

Eventually, they gave up; and surrender.

Regardless of why your Cadet might have an attitude of learned helplessness, it's important to stop doing things that they need to do for themselves. Don't do their homework—let them do it. You can be available for help if necessary, but don't take on their tasks. One of the most important things an adolescent has to learn is independence, and if you take on their responsibilities, you're robbing them of this chance to develop.

Learn How to Be a Coach: A good coach is not constantly saying, "You're great, you're the best, you're a superstar!" Rather, they always keep their athletes looking forward by complimenting them on the specifics of their progress: "Nice layup, you positioned your hands better that time, Keep it up." Always keep your Cadet looking forward. Comment on their progress instead of telling them how great they are when they haven't put forth much of an effort. They will see through flattery and false praise and it usually backfires.

Set Deadlines and Use Structure: Cadets are used to structure and meeting deadlines. They will thrive is you continue to provide this for them. Ask them about their goals, help them identify tasks to complete those goals and set deadlines for the tasks and goals.

External References

Education	
WI Technical College System: This site contains a listing of the various technical colleges in the state of Wisconsin.	https://www.wtcsystem.edu/colleges/
Job Corps: Provides free training for various trades at two locations in the state: Milwaukee and Laona.	https://www.jobcorps.gov/
UW System: This site contains a listing of the campuses in the UW system.	https://www.wisconsin.edu/campuses/
WI School Districts: Website providing information about Wisconsin school districts.	https://apps6.dpi.wi.gov/SchDirPublic/districts
Financial Aid for College (FAFSA): Here you will be able to complete the about Free Application for Student Aid.	https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid
Employment	
Job Center of Wisconsin: Free- connects job seekers with employment opportunities throughout Wisconsin	https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/
Military	
US Army	https://www.goarmy.com/ https://www.army.mil/
US Navy	https://www.navy.com/ https://www.navy.mil/
US Marine Corps	https://www.marines.com/ https://www.usmc.mil
US Air Force	https://www.airforce.com/ https://www.af.mil/
WI National Guard	https://ng.wi.gov/
US Coast Guard	https://www.uscg.mil/
WI DMV	https://wisconsin.gov/
Mental Health & Addiction	
Mental Health Alliance of Wisconsin: Click on “Find Resources in Your County” to access resources available.	http://www.mhawisconsin.org/
211 Wisconsin: Call 211 to be connected with thousands of programs and services that provide support	https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/

Academy Contact

Medical Department

The Academy staff includes a Registered Nurse to make any determinations as to your Cadet's medical needs while in residence. Cadets refer to this person as the *Medic*.

- a. **Generally, all medical and dental expenses including prescriptions incurred by your Cadet while in residence are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.** However, injuries incurred by your Cadet while properly participating in prescribed Academy activities and in compliance with Academy rules and regulations may be covered by federal worker's compensation. For example, the medical expenses resulting from a broken bone while participating in a scheduled Academy sporting activity would be covered, while the expenses resulting from an injury while absent without leave (AWOL) would not. For the purposes of worker's compensation, your Cadet is considered a federal employee at the GS-2 pay grade. Should a worker's compensation claim be necessary, the Academy will facilitate the filing of that claim by your Cadet.
- b. The Academy will provide the doctor, hospital, or pharmacy with your insurance or medical aid information when necessary to respond to an illness or injury. You are responsible for all co-payments, deductibles, and all non-covered charges. It is recommended that you notify your insurance carrier that your Cadet is living in the Sparta-Tomah area. Some carriers require this.
- c. The Challenge Academy nurse is the only person authorized to make medical or dental appointments for your Cadet while at the Challenge Academy. Do not make medical or dental appointments for your Cadet while he or she is in residence at the Challenge Academy.
- d. The Challenge Academy will contact you if your Cadet requires off-site medical attention. Due to the volume of occurrences, you will not be contacted if your Cadet has routine illnesses or medical issues that are cared for at the Challenge Academy.
- e. The Medic can be reached by calling 608-269-3719

Academy Contact

Legal Guardians will be informed by e-mail and postal mail of important activities and events, such as: Cycle Passes, virtual and in person events, and commencement. There is no need to contact the Academy for this information; it will be provided to you at the appropriate time.

- a. If it is necessary to contact the Challenge Academy, please call (608) 269-9000 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, less State holidays. The person answering the phone will direct you to the staff member who can best assist you. You may also e-mail us at challenge@wisconsin.gov anytime.
- b. If an emergency arises on state holidays, weekends, or after 4:00 p.m. on weekdays contact the Academy at (608) 269-8037; and leave a voice message if someone does not answer immediately. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. Our staff size is very limited and is extremely busy meeting the needs of all our Cadets. PLEASE USE THIS NUMBER FOR EMERGENCY PURPOSES ONLY.

In addition to providing direct support for any of your questions or concerns through contacting us at the Challenge Academy, you can also stay connected via Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. These online tools are set up to allow you an informal look at what the Cadets are doing in general, and to allow you to communicate with other parents via the Forum tab on our Facebook page.

Questions concerning Challenge Academy policies or procedures will not be answered on social media. For those questions, please contact us by:

Phone: (608) 269-9000 **Email:** challenge@wisconsin.gov

Stay Connected

Use the camera app on your smart phone and hover over the QR codes below to visit our social media sites.



WI National Guard Challenge Academy
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