



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Don't Quit on Me explores what young people say about how relationships with adults and peers affect their decisions about staying in, leaving and returning to high school. The young people we interviewed and surveyed told us that the strength, number and nature of relationships in their lives are important factors that influence their engagement with school.

So what can organizations serving young people, and the adults working in them, do to help? Here are some questions to explore with your colleagues.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do the findings in *Don't Quit on Me* reinforce or challenge what you believe about young people who interrupt their high school education? What surprised you? What new questions are you asking yourself as a result?
- When you read the quotes from young people that are included in the report, what most stands out to you? What aspects of their stories remind you of the place you work or young people you know?
- Review the four types of support (at right). What kinds of support do you most frequently provide, and how? Where do gaps in support exist? How might you and your colleagues fill these gaps?
- What are the formal and informal ways in which young people encounter supportive relationships in your program or organization? How could you and your colleagues make these kinds of encounters more intentional and more frequent?
- How could your program or organization shift how you use existing resources to provide more academic or social support to young people?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- Read [this blog](#) from Search Institute: “Does Your School or Program Really Value Relationships? Six Questions to Ask.” In about 500 words, it invites individuals to explore how their organizations invest time, people, money and other resources in building relationships.

Defining Support

Support can come from many sources, including parents, peers, adults at school and adults in the community.

Don't Quit on Me examines four types of social support. Each of these plays a specific role in a young person's development.

- **Emotional support** expresses comfort, caring, and trust.
- **Informational support** is comprised of helpful insights or advice such as how to re-engage in school, where to find a job, or how to apply to college.
- **Appraisal support** refers to positive feedback that someone can use for self-evaluation, such as affirming a young person's competence or pointing out specific strengths that can lead to success.
- **Instrumental support** refers to tangible resources or services, including providing a bus pass, babysitting an infant so a parent can attend school, introducing a young person to a potential employer, or bringing a young person to visit a college campus.

Emotional and instrumental support — caring and action — appear to work in tandem to boost the likelihood that a young person will graduate.