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# ESE Master Logo Indicators of Effective Advising

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#### Background and Purpose of the Indicators

A recent ACLS Task Force on Advising for the field of Adult Basic Education offered recommendations for strengthening the advising component in community adult learning centers.

For this reason, ACLS has developed Indicators of Effective Advising in ABE to be used by programs as a tool for self-assessment and planning.

In an increasingly rigorous college and career readiness context, this tool will be useful to programs as the role of advisor is strengthened to support student needs for college and career readiness.

The following document, *Indicators for Effective Advising,* draws from

* recommendations from an Advising Task Force;
* ACLS guidelines on effective education and career advising, and
* research from the literature on academic advising.

**Who Developed the Indicators**The Indicators were developed collaboratively by a team of Academic Advisors from community adult learning centers in Massachusetts. Lenore Balliro facilitated the group and crafted the final indicators. The Advisors included:

* Michelle Gatta, Northern Essex Community College
* Emily Goncalves, College Bound Dorchester
* Joselyn Marte, Lawrence Adult Learning Center

**What the Indicators Are**

The Indicators are concise descriptors of effective advising for community adult learning centers. They were developed to help community adult learning programs strengthen their advising component. The Indicators reflect responsibilities of all staff to support the work of the advisor and to meet students’ ongoing goal setting needs.

#### What the Indicators Are Not

They Indicators are not hierarchical. That is, they are not ranked by importance. The numbering system is used to keep the Indicators separate, but Indicator one is not more important than indicator five. The Indicators are not mandatory, although ACLS strongly encourages programs to use the Indictors to strengthen their programs. While the Indicators are not policy guidelines, they do intersect with policy guidelines, particularly in the areas of legal compliance. In such cases, links to the ACLS policies are included with the Indicators.

#### Organization of the Indicators

There are five (5) indicators, organized broadly by the following categories:

* Culture and Climate Of College And Career Readiness
* Goal Setting/Planning
* Addressing Obstacles/Barriers to Meeting Goals
* Community Engagement
* Legal Compliance

Each category offers one indicator. Each indicator offers several descriptions of practices that exemplify the indicator. In some cases, the practices are broken down by Advisor or Director to highlight the different responsibilities of each staff. Where the practices are not broken down, it is assumed they are the responsibilities of the entire staff.

#### Suggestions for Using the Indicators as a Self-assessment and Planning Tool

Reviewing theIndicators with the entire staff early in the year can help programs look at where they are already strong and where they need to improve in their academic advising component. This process can be folded into the Continuous Improvement and Planning process that program are already using.

A self-assessment scale is included with the indicators to help staff make these judgments. The scale looks like this:

1. Improvement is most needed.
2. Improvement is highly needed.
3. Minor improvements are possible.
4. This area is fully addressed.

In addition to the assessment scale, the Indicators include a space for comments where staff can add notes relevant to their own programs and classrooms.

Once programs establish initial priorities, they can create an action plan for improvement. Just as student goals are revisited throughout the year to assess progress and to make modifications, the Indicatorsare intended for use in an ongoing manner.

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| **Indicator 1: CULTURE AND CLIMATE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**  The program director sets a positive tone for education and career planning as part of overall program planning and the program’s advising component. | | |
| 1. Improvement is most needed.   2. Improvement is highly needed.  3.  Minor improvements are possible.    4. This area is fully addressed. | | |
| Practices - Director | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. The program director conducts “Persistence Self-assessment” with staff and revisits results periodically to assess progress. See: [www.nelrc.org/persist/program\_assess.html](http://www.nelrc.org/persist/program_assess.html) |  |  |
| 1. The program director meets regularly with advisor(s) and teachers to integrate Education and Career Planning into curriculum and classroom practice. |  |  |
| 1. The program director ensures the percentage of time an advisor is designated for advising by planning for adequate staffing (substitutes, testers, etc.) for non-advising work. |  |  |
| 1. The program director ensures equity in advising services for day and evening students. |  |  |
| 1. The program director ensures that non -native English speakers are provided the same level of college and career readiness advising support as native English speakers. |  |  |
| 1. The program administration promotes strategies and structures for the advisor(s) and teachers to work together to encourage career and college readiness for all students. |  |  |

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| **INDICATOR 2: GOAL SETTING/PLANNING**  Advisor and teachers meet with students initially and over time to help students identify and achieve authentic, student-generated goals. | | |
| 1. Improvement is most needed.   2. Improvement is highly needed.  3.  Minor improvements are possible.    4. This area is fully addressed. | | |
| Practices – Advisor and Teaching Staff | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. The entire program staff builds a welcoming environment and trusting relationships with students from point of contact through completion of program. |  |  |
| 1. Students know how to locate the advisor. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and designated staff introduce the education and career planning process at intake. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers recognize that student goal setting is flexible, culturally sensitive, and always evolving. Education and career plans are intended to revisited over time as needed with students. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers help students articulate and break down short and long-term goals. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor meets regularly with teachers to share non-confidential case notes relevant to students’ progress and are available to teachers when they express concerns about students. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers understand policies, content, and purpose of the key elements of  * Education and Career Plans * Education and Career Plans with Family Goals * Family Education Plans   and choose one of these plans depending on students’ initial needs when they enter the program. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers incorporate student education and career goals into contextualized curriculum by  * integrating advisor led workshops in class; * using the Integrated Career Awareness Guide\* lessons for job search; * inviting employers into class to share job and career awareness.   \* <http://www.collegetransition.org/docs/ICAcurriculumguide.pdf> |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers integrate Family Goal Plans into classroom instruction by  * creating lessons on helping children with homework; * creating lessons around the culture of school systems; * creating lessons around parenting self-reflections; * inviting culturally relevant family educators into class to discuss healthy families; * encouraging support among parents with similar age children to identify challenges and supports for their children; * documenting and celebrating family achievements, and * other family needs and interests. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor and teachers use methods described in Appreciative Advising and Integrating Career Awareness (ICA) guide to help students set goals. |  |  |

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| Practices-Advisor | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. Advisor participates in intake and orientation to initially meet students; maintains regular contact throughout students’ participation in the program; and follows up with students after program completion or after student exits program. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor meets with students in flexible formats (individually, in groups, in the classroom, through email, phone, and social media) over time to set realistic goals and to help students evaluate their progress. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor helps students identify strengths, anticipate barriers to success, and practice strategies to overcome barriers. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor establishes and posts a schedule of availability for student meetings that remains consistent and synchronous with the programs’ schedule of classes. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor stays current on prevailing theories and research in the field of academic advising, participates in appropriate professional development, including Bloom’s *Appreciative Advising* approach developed at the University of North Carolina. |  |  |

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| Indicator 3: **ADDRESSING OBSTACLES/BARRIERS TO REACHING GOALS**  Advisors and staff educate themselves about factors that impede students’ progress and use that knowledge to help students meet their goals. | | |
| 1. Improvement is most needed.   2. Improvement is highly needed.  3.  Minor improvements are possible.    4. This area is fully addressed. | | |
| Practices | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. Advisor understands legal limits in questioning students about disabilities. Advisor creates a comfortable and safe space where students can voluntarily disclose information that may affect their learning progress. |  |  |
| 1. Staff is aware of conditions that affect their students’ progress. These may include  * the effects of trauma, violence, poverty, incarceration, legal status, and spiritual/cultural beliefs. When appropriate, the program director seeks out and implements professional development opportunities to help staff become more informed in these areas. |  |  |
| 1. Staff displays respect for differences in age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Advisors help foster this respect among teachers, staff, and students by facilitating workshops and assisting teachers with classroom conflicts that arise. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor observes personal and emotional boundaries with students. Advisor recognizes healthy limit setting and is transparent with students about those limits. Advisor does not solve students’ problems for them but provides tools and resources for students to help themselves. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor encourages and helps students anticipate impediments to success and helps them develop “Plan B” strategies ahead of time. For example, researching and mapping out public transportation options or creating a list of other students willing to carpool in situations where this would be useful. |  |  |
| 1. The Program Director recognizes the emotional toll advisors bear in their work and supports the Advisor by not assigning non-relevant work tasks.  * Advisor recognizes signs of self-burnout and seeks ways to maintain well-being. This may involve protecting aspects of the job description, requesting personal or vacation time when needed, seeking support of other advisor-colleagues, and participation in quarterly advisor sharing groups. |  |  |

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| **Indicator 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  Advisor builds relationships with community services that are academically, culturally, and linguistically relevant and accessible to students and makes referrals when appropriate | | |
| 1. Improvement is most needed.   2. Improvement is highly needed.  3.  Minor improvements are possible.    4. This area is fully addressed. | | |
| Practices | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. Advisor establishes and maintains face-to-face relationships with key staff in relevant community services and shares this information with teachers and staff. These services include, but are not limited to health, mental health, housing, education and training, libraries, food pantries, shelters, childcare, legal assistance, transportation and cultural enrichment centers. |  |  |
| 1. Teachers integrate lessons on community resources that include the role of community colleges and workforce partners into the curriculum by planning field trips to local agencies based on students’ interests and needs or by inviting representatives of community agencies and workforce partners into the classroom. |  |  |
| 1. Members of the ABE Community Planning Partnership/Coalition provide supports linking the classroom to community services. |  |  |

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| **Indicator 5: LEGAL COMPLIANCE**  Program Director and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator keep staff updated on relevant legal mandates. The Director oversees legal compliance by all staff. | | |
| 1. Improvement is most needed.   2. Improvement is highly needed.  3.  Minor improvements are possible.    4. This area is fully addressed. | | |
| Practices | Self-assessment | Comments |
| 1. ADA Coordinators attend annual ADA trainings or other related professional development and keep a binder or electronic file on updated compliance information, and include this information in teacher and staff hiring and orientations and annual updates for staff. |  |  |
| 1. All program staff understand the three classes of students covered by mandated reporting, including    * + children - birth to 18 years old;      + adults with disabilities - 18-59 years old;      + adults- 60+years old   and make mandated reporting clear to students. See the following websites:   * <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dcf/child-abuse-neglect/> * <http://www.mass.gov/dppc/abuse-report/> |  |  |
| 1. All program staff understand what constitutes abuse and neglect, when and how to report suspected abuse and neglect, and who is responsible for reporting. |  |  |
| 1. Students are informed that all program staff are mandated reporters. |  |  |
| 1. Advisor understands and observes all confidentiality guidelines as required by law. |  |  |

**WORKS AND WEBSITES CONSULTED**

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