

# Sponsor brief for the Soft Skills Program

**As the founder of EDGE Coaching Services**, I am delighted to be bringing you an overview of an exciting program that has been researched, designed, and delivered by myself Richard Forde. As a former pastoral educator my passion has always been around developing youth to be well rounded individuals. Delivering this program will help them gain skills to aid them in developing the fortitude to be that friendly supportive voice of reason. I hope you find this opportunity of interest.

## The program



The program is a Soft Skills workshop based around the delivery of skills that, in general, can only be attained through experiences. The program is designed to give all participants a basic understanding of Soft Skills, for them to then go and seek experiences to practice and then ingrain these disciplines in their day-to-day life thereby improving their prospects and that of those around them.

## The aim

The aim of the program is to support the school by preparing students to develop character traits that support situational awareness and enhance their ability to work in harmony with others.

## Why Soft Skills?

In an interview the BSTU Leader Mary Ann Redman suggested that ***“a greater level of focus on behaviour change modification and a shift from a purely educational focus were needed”***. She continued, ***“there must be a focus on the soft skills: interpersonal skills, values education, conflict resolution, respect for self, for others, for the environment and for our nation”***. This was in 2019, we at EDGE believe this is still the case.

This month (January 2023) our Prime Minister “The Right Honorable” Mia Mottley stated during a Community Mediation Workshop at the Barbados Community College that, ***“a major objective is focusing on the social and emotional development of the students”***. This course will go some way towards achieving just that. Finally, according to research conducted in Harvard and Stanford Universities, **only 15% of your career success is provided by your hard skills, whilst the other 85% by soft skills.**

## The full program

The original program has been created to run over 12 weeks, with each session being ninety minutes. The school time version will be an adaptation but will cover all topics. The students’ complete sessions on the following topics. **Communication, Active Listening, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Time Management, Interpersonal Skills, Responsibility and Accountability, Creativity and Collaboration and Conflict Resolution.**



## The target audience

It is the desire of EDGE Coaching Services to prepare and deliver this course in government schools, at very little or no cost, to as many students as possible in the coming decade, if not longer. Early indications from education say the optimum cohort are those about to transition from primary to secondary, or from fifth heading to lower sixth or tertiary. The other factor highlighted is that in term three, form three, would be an option as they may have less exam pressure at this time.

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## Target numbers

In the first year, our aim is to deliver this program in 6-8 schools across Barbados. Our target is to reach **1000** students **by the end of the academic year 2023-24**. The course will be adapted to run for 8 weeks instead of 12 to fit in with the school term and will run for all three terms. This will be achieved by having deliveries on each day from Monday to Thursday. Early indications show these sessions delivered during the school councilors periods will offer extra support to assist with behaviors for learning and life.



## Delivery

This soft skills course will be very interactive. It incorporates games, discussions, group, and outdoor activities throughout the course as well as the students having to complete a weekly journal which will detail their experiences for them to refer in the future as a part of ingraining their experiences. This will hopefully make it fun and engaging where the students will be able to absorb the information delivered and enjoy the process of learning how to be a well-rounded young person, successful employee, and a future leader. Each student will have a program booklet which will be for information and can be used as a reference resource long after the course is completed.

## Reviews from the pilot of the course

We are currently delivering this program to a second group of Young Leaders, having delivered this course to the initial YMCA Young leaders' program in 2022, I am delighted to share feedback garnered from the coordinator, and students who undertook the program. When asked on the course evaluation sheet for (any other) comments about the program, the YMCA program coordinator wrote;



***"I think the course was well conceptualized and implemented. I commend the tutor's dedication for fully committing to the course and giving his all within each session. He had a great connection with the participants and his attitude never wavered. Mr. Forde can take great credit for the transformation of the students throughout the overall program. I am eagerly looking forward to doing it all over again with a new group".***

Of the students who undertook the program, when asked if they would recommend the course and why they said

***"It was a fun course; I learnt a lot about things I didn't know."*** Another wrote ***"I would tell them to do the course because they can learn a lot from the course that they can use in later life."*** A third wrote ***"I would say it was really fun and educational"***

## How can you get involved?

As stated earlier, for the students in our government schools, we would like to make this accessible for as little as possible, even free, if we can get enough sponsors. For clarity there are two ways to get involved the first is via a pledge and writing a foreword in the booklet (stage one) the second is by way of sponsoring the delivery of the program and its associated costs (stage three).

For further information on stage three, or if you would like to sponsor a topic, please contact Shani Adams who you may have had previous contact with or Richard Forde using the details below.