



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS

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. What we learned, in part, is that supportive relationships are a powerful lever for raising graduation rates, and small interventions can make a big difference for most youth. In particular, caring and action work in tandem to boost likely graduation.

So what can each of us do to help? This guide suggests some ways that you can explore this topic with your family, your faith community, a neighborhood association, or another group of caring adults.

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?
- Where are the places you encounter high school-age youth in your community? What opportunities do you have to greet them, to ask about their well-being, to comment on their accomplishments, or to offer a resource they might need? How could you express support during your day-to-day interactions?
- Moving homes and changing schools can be disruptive to success in high school. How can you welcome new teenagers to your neighborhood?
- Young people who struggle to stay in school often need more than academic support. They might be working part-time or full-time to help support their family, they might be caregivers for siblings or parents, or they might be new parents themselves. How could you contribute time, talent, or other resources to an organization that employs young people in flexible ways, supports teen parents, or boosts economic mobility for lower-income families?
- If you had to commute from your home to your local high school each day, how long would it take? How much would it cost? If you were a teenager living in poverty, what might be hard for you about getting to school?
- Can you make a commitment, yourself or as part of a team, to volunteering with a local program that helps young people stay in or return to high school?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- Download the user-friendly two-page [Developmental Relationships Framework](#) from Search Institute, and choose one aspect of the framework as your focus. What specific actions could you take over the next month?
- Read the short description on MENTOR's web site about [becoming a mentor](#). If you have the qualities young people seek and the time to make a commitment, check out the searchable database of opportunities at www.Mentoring.org.

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.