

# Rewriting Futures Discovery Series

The Rewriting Futures Discovery Series is provided by the New Legacy Foundation. The New Legacy Foundation exists because life is intended to be lived to the full. The most substantial work of the New Legacy Foundation centers on the development of tools and strategies that promote the establishment and nurture of healthy relationships and push back against the stuff that seeks to steal away the opportunity for life that is both fulfilling and fruitful.

The purpose of the Discovery Series is to give educators and other influencers the ability to build relationships with students while giving them an open door to share about their life. **We believe strong relationships will create healthy outcomes.** The secondary goal is to teach our young people about the pitfalls of substance abuse, violence, bullying, and other negatives that, unfortunately, define our culture.

REWRITING FUTURES

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[RewritingFutures.com/resources](https://www.RewritingFutures.com/resources)

# The Issues

Children are facing incredible challenges today - things like social anxiety, bullying and violence, increased substance abuse, depression and suicide. Consider the current opioid crisis alone. If current trends continue over the next 10 years, there will be a 186% increase in deaths. In surveys of adolescents receiving treatment for substance abuse, more than 70% of patients had a history of trauma exposure. Suicides in children ages 10-14 doubled between 2007 and 2014 and it is reported that one child under the age of 13 is committing suicide every 5 days. These realities are staggering. Something must be done to help our children & future generations through early intervention, awareness, & prevention.

## Why is This So Important?

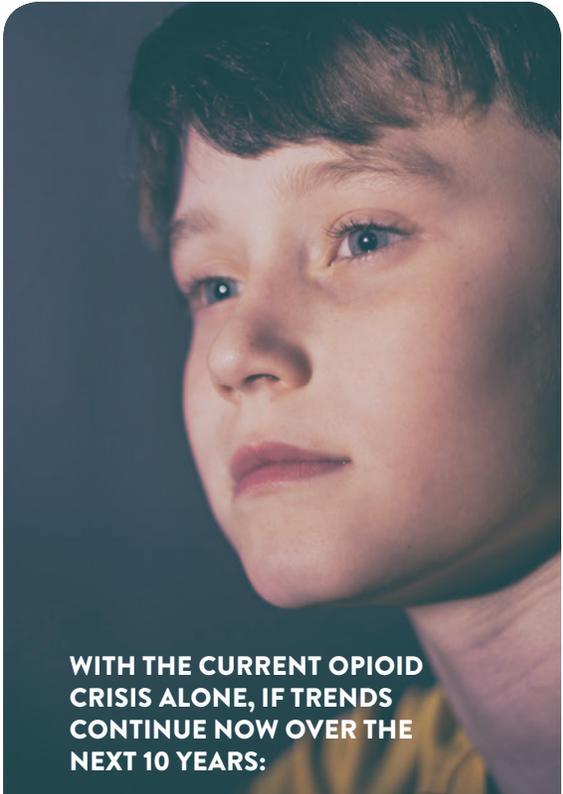
Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics said, **“Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.”** Sometimes we know when a child is experiencing something traumatic at home. They act out in class continuously or sometimes we have information from social workers or guardians about what the child has experienced. However, there are times when we don't know what a child is facing or what he or she is suppressing inside. Studies have shown that 70% of adolescents in recovery from substance abuse faced a traumatic experience as a child. We need to know what our students are going through and we need to be there to listen and encourage them. While we may not be the one to solve or address the problem, we can point the child in the right direction to get the help they need, which may be as simple as following reporting protocols already in place in your school.

Today, nearly all children are dealing with trauma on some level. Some are physically abused and others are experiencing things like anxiety, fear, depression or instability. We need to hear what these children are going through and come alongside of them and begin to love and care for them in a deeper way.

Research by the Harvard Center for Child Development shows that when there is a positive influence and relationship for a child (could be a parent, teacher, coach, etc.), that these children will build “resilience” and be more successful over their lifetime as they strive to overcome adverse situations and difficulties. **(Watch the videos at [RewritingFutures.com](http://RewritingFutures.com)).**

Research has also shown that when a tragic or intense story is told, the brain in the listener releases Cortisol, which helps focus attention. Oxytocin is also released while we hear sad stories and feel a sense of care, connection, and empathy. This really serves to connect a group when each person shares their story.

These connections also help a group of strangers or acquaintances go deeper in connection and relationship. If your group meets for only a short amount of time, stories can help you go deeper faster. You have an opportunity with each child to help them overcome by teaching them about the influences of media, relationships and harmful substances, and how they can be empowered to make good choices. You can be a positive influence through discussion and relationship, which is helping rewrite the future.



**WITH THE CURRENT OPIOID CRISIS ALONE, IF TRENDS CONTINUE NOW OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS:**

**186%**  
INCREASE IN DEATHS

**KIDS RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE:**

**70%+**  
HAD A HISTORY OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE

**SUICIDES IN CHILDREN AGES 10-14:**

**1 Child**  
COMMITTING SUICIDE EVERY 5 DAYS

# Overview of Rewriting Futures Program

**The Rewriting Futures Discovery Series is a tool for children that provides opportunities for early intervention, awareness, and prevention.**

Its purpose is to give educators, influencers and children opportunities to build relationship through three discovery sections: My Home, Overcoming, and Dreaming. In small groups (called Discovery Groups) teachers, social workers, counselors, parent volunteers and principals (for example) will lead students through each Discovery Book sections in different sessions.

This is not a curriculum, but a tool that walks each child through the three major workbook sections to discover more about a child's home life, how to overcome, and their goals and dreams for the future. Through this process, educators and influencers have an incredible opportunity to really know their students and intervene early in traumatic and difficult circumstances, or even help them learn to overcome common difficulties such as sickness, death, anxiety, a broken arm, etc. Finally, by addressing each student's dreams and what can hinder those dreams, educators can build a foundation for talking about negative influences, drugs, alcohol, and other abuses, and how they can be prevented.



## Desired Outcomes



1. To give children opportunity to share about their life, their feelings/difficulties, how to overcome, and share their dreams.
2. To give teachers and other influencers opportunity to create a safe environment for children to share hardships (big or small). Vulnerability of all students in a small group scenario creates that opportunity. This creates an incredible window into a child's life that will greatly improve their educational experience.
3. To identify each child's goals and dreams for the future.
4. To identify pitfalls or hindrances to those dreams.
5. To educate students on the dangers of negative influences including drug and alcohol abuse and how such influences can quickly derail dreams for the future.
6. To create a more relational environment and give more opportunity for teachers to hear students' hearts and encourage them in a deeper way throughout the year.

Through this process, we want to help teachers have a better way to connect with students while still leveraging academic components such as writing, discussion, and listening. The app component (in development) is designed to give students an additional interactive way for continued engagement through the tracking of dreams and goals, and preventative games and films.

# Getting Started

## Rewriting Futures Discovery Series

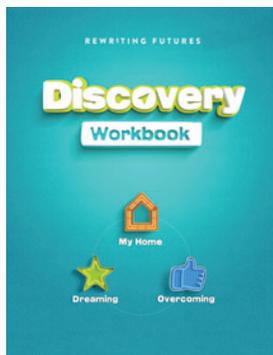
The Discovery Series can be implemented quickly into any classroom or group setting. It can be completed in a week or two or over a few weeks, with ongoing engagement and check-in elements to maximize participants' experience.

### How to be successful with this tool:

- Get students excited about this! It's an opportunity for them to share about their life
- Give students time to write in their workbooks
- Create enough time for Discovery Groups so children can have great conversation

We suggest starting the Discovery Series once your class or group has had opportunity to get to know you as teacher and each other a little better. Beginning during the first few weeks of school may be too early. Similarly, if you wait to integrate this during the last few weeks of school, you may limit the opportunity for relationships to form. Though very flexible, we feel that this is best suited for writing times, discussion times, and ideally implemented over a 7-week period if possible. Again, it can be done more quickly or over a longer period of time, but 7 weeks is the approximate time-frame we feel works best based on our testing and implementation studies.

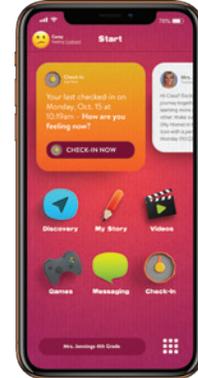
### The three primary pillars of the Discovery Series for each student are:



**1. DISCOVERY BOOK**  
(Writing)



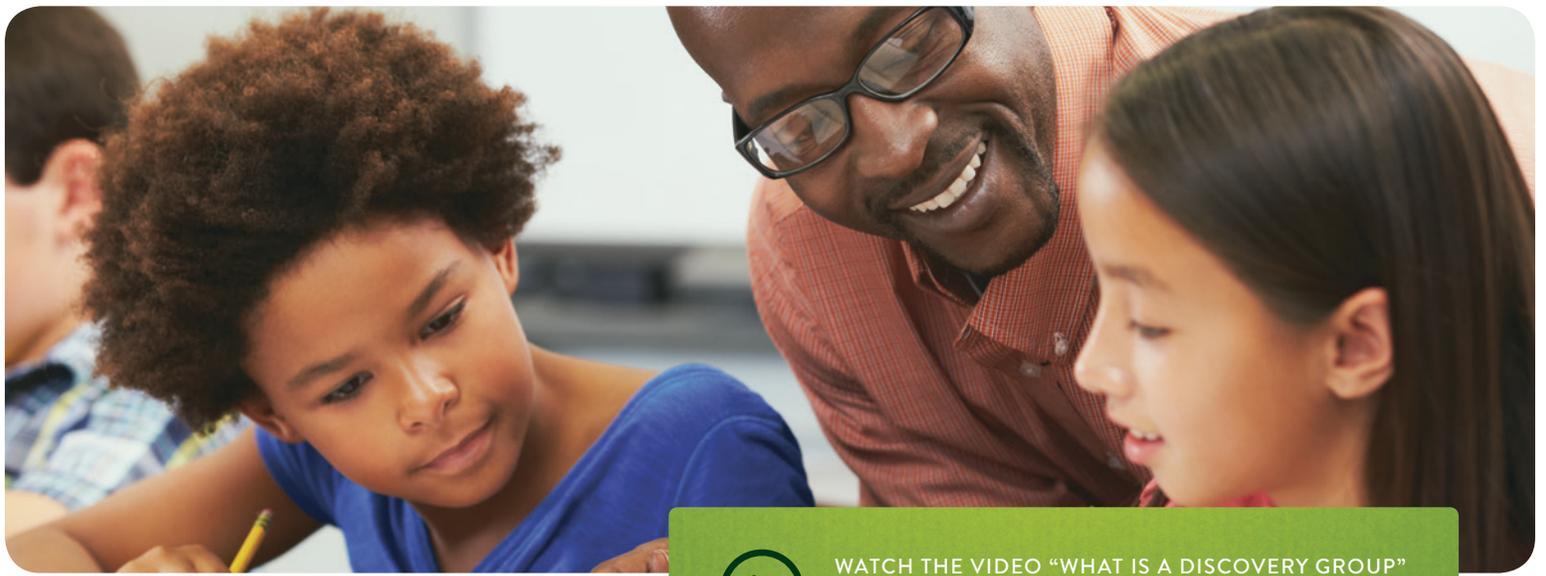
**2. DISCOVERY GROUPS**  
(Discussion)



**3. DISCOVERY APP**  
(Interactive, continued engagement, in development currently)

There are six major sections of the Discovery Workbook that can be completed in six sessions, each with a writing (Discovery Workbook) component to be followed by a discussion component (Discovery Groups). The writing and discussion could be back to back or done separately, but the writing comes first.

1. **Group Introduction** (pp 1-4)
2. **Home** (pp 5-8)
3. **Overcoming: Part 1, Difficulties** (pp 9-12)
4. **Overcoming: Part 2** (pp 13-14)
5. **Dreaming** (pp 15-18)
6. **Choices & Influences** (pp 19-24)
7. **Drugs & Alcohol** (pp 25-28)



WATCH THE VIDEO “WHAT IS A DISCOVERY GROUP”

[RewritingFutures.com/resources](https://RewritingFutures.com/resources)



# Discovery Groups and Guides

**Discovery Groups can happen in the classroom or outside the classroom. The purpose of a Discovery Group is to give each child an opportunity to share about their life, build relationship with other students and with the Discovery Guide who will lead this small group.**

Discovery Group sizes will vary depending upon your class size and how many Guides (leaders) you have. The goal is to have 4 or 5 students in each group. You may also want to be strategic in how you place students in these groups. For instance, you may choose to place children with similar known challenges together or group students with similar cultural or socio-economic backgrounds. You may find it more advantageous to keep the entire group integrated to foster increased understanding of the differences in people. It’s up to you. Both approaches can be effective. It’s important to learn about others as well as find commonality and shared experiences with fellow students.

**Discovery Group Guides (leaders) are there to listen, ask questions, encourage, and even share some of their own stories with the group.** We like to encourage both the Discovery Guides and students in the group to remember the three “L’s” that will help us as we interact in our group. You can share these helpful principles in the group and beyond:

## 1. LOOK

When someone in our group is talking or sharing, we all give them eye contact to be fully engaged visually. If we’re not looking or are looking around at other things, it makes others feel like we are not interested in what they have to say. Make great eye contact. You want people to look at you while you’re sharing.

## 2. LISTEN

When someone in our group is talking or sharing, we listen intently and we don’t talk or interrupt them. When the time is right, we can ask a question or make a comment. But we listen deeply to answers or stories. We want others to hear us when we share.

## 3. LEARN

Finally, we want to learn about each other’s similarities, differences, and stories, valuing what we’ve learned about each other. When we learn about others, we “acquire knowledge” about that person and we remember it in the future so we can ask good questions and engage the next time we interact. We want others to learn about us, who we are and what things we like.

In each Discovery Group, as the Guide (or leader), the goal is to build relationship and facilitate good conversation and respect for each other in the group. You as the teacher should lead a group, as well as others (principals, assistant principals, counselors, social workers, coaches, volunteers etc.) These are influential and trusted staff members who are vital to helping build foundations of trust with each student. It may be possible to engage trusted parents from a PTA/PTO who have expressed interest and commitment to be group leaders. These Guides will lead the same group during each Discovery Series session.

**After students complete each major section of the workbook (sessions denoted later in this overview), they will break up into small Discovery Groups and share their discoveries about themselves with the Guide “guiding” the conversation.** A goal for each Discovery Group session should be to have each student participate by sharing from their assignment. Although we don’t force the participation, the leader should encourage it.

Many studies over the last decade have reinforced the concepts of this program - from relationship building, to creating a vulnerable and safe place, to listening, and goal-setting for the future.

As you move further through the workbook, certain sections can become more sensitive as students share difficulties they’ve faced or are facing. First of all, by letting every child share difficulties (even the Guide sharing a difficulty they’ve faced) vulnerability is created and begins to bring the walls down. This is very important as it helps children learn to have empathy for others. Empathy is a critical component of healthy relationship. It also lets children know that they are not the only one’s facing hardships in their lives. We all do.



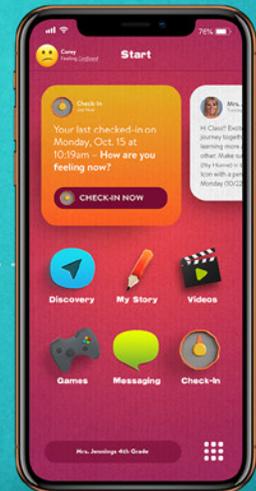
We’ve also created the Safe Spot because some things may be too hard to write or share in a group. Each Discovery Guide is a Safe Spot, so let children know that they always have opportunity to share with a Guide something that is difficult or hard going on in their life. In our testing, we’ve found that this is where children feel an open door to share about abuse or trauma they are experiencing inside or outside of school. If you discover any type of abuse or intense trauma, please share this with your principal and/or social worker to find the right pathway to help the child in need.

Finally, the Discovery Group is a great place for students to have the spotlight on them for a few moments and to help them learn to listen to others as they share their difficulties and dreams. This creates a space to collaborate and think critically as a group and to brainstorm together.

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# Discovery

Series



Digital platform coming soon

FOR TEACHERS + STUDENTS

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- Discovery Group Guide + Videos
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FROM BEING A SUCCESS STORY.

JOSH SHIPP

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