

WHY WE NEED YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXPLORE EDUCATION OPTIONS:

Young people across South Africa dream about improving their lives through education. Going to university remains the top choice for many youth and their families – and understandably so. Did you know a college-qualified youth earns 60% more than someone with a Matric! The reality, however, is that few young people make it to tertiary institutions, let alone finish Matric. And for those who do make it to university, more than 40% drop out in their first year. It's therefore vital we encourage young people to consider all of their post-school education options, and help them prepare for pitfalls that may get in their way and prevent them from realising their full potential!

KEY EDUCATION TALKING POINTS

1

"Most of the children I know who fail Matric first try the rewrite. Only a couple have been successful, and then it has taken ages for some of them to get their new certificates," warns Cosmo City youth volunteer Di Levinsohn. "A major issue is they study the same way that didn't work before." Speak to the young person about their study style: discuss what's working and what's not so they don't repeat the same mistakes twice – whether they're at school or college/university. Find out if there a bridging programme in the area that can help them get the skills they need to improve their grades and/or prepare for the type of academic learning expected in tertiary institutions?

2

Many young people are not getting enough (or any) career guidance at school when it comes to choosing career paths and related fields of study. This can lead to high drop-out rates – wasting time and money. Encourage the young person to find out more about what they want to study, and/or see if they can do a job shadow or internship in their desired industry BEFORE they commit to studying towards it.

3

There are many stories about students whose fees, or additional costs, such as registration and res fees, weren't paid in full or came in late from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, or NSFAS. In 2016, NSFAS introduced a new system to allow students to know upfront what they will have to repay (if they fail to pay their share, they will not be able to register.) So, chat with the young person to see if they know EXACTLY what their funding covers. Ask if they have a way to cover expenses if NSFAS is late in paying. Also, youth who get NSFAS loans are expected and encouraged to pay them back once they start earning at least R30 000/year. If they perform well and pass their subjects, up to 40% of NSFAS loans can be converted into bursaries. If they meet all graduation requirements in their last year of study, NSFAS will convert the loan to a 100% bursary. Is the young person aware of the repayment terms?

4

Some bursaries in South Africa are also only partial bursaries! If applying for one, does the young person know what they will be paying for, such as accommodation, textbooks, transport and food? Talk about how they plan to pay for these things.



5

Many students in tertiary institutions come from extremely poor backgrounds – with a combined household income of between R400-R1 600 per month. As a result, they often have to take on part-time jobs to meet their educational needs AND their daily survival obligations, like food and shelter. This often leads to burn-out, poor grades, or dropping out completely. Discuss if the young person will need to work to finance their studies. If so, explore how they can achieve a study-work-life balance, and what to do if they find work is taking its toll.



6

If the young person cannot go to university, find out if they have considered a TVET college. As some private TVET colleges have proven to be scams, it's important they make sure the TVET college they are interested in is legitimate or registered with the Department of Higher Education & Training. Youth also continue to view TVET colleges as a second-rate option compared to university. But have they asked themselves if they are more academically- or technically inclined? Is the young person able to find someone in their community or network who has found success through a TVET college? Have they looked at the fees and subjects/courses on offer? NSFAS funding has shifted over the years to favour colleges rather than universities, in support of growing SA's skills shortages. This means students who meet the financial means test will pay minimal to no fees to go to a TVET college.

'WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?': From passing Matric to getting a degree...

GETTING A MATRIC: If a young person has failed their Matric or did not receive the grades they had hoped for, they can: rewrite failed or low-mark subjects; approach their nearest high-school to ask about re-doing Matric; or register for an ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training Course) to get a Matric equivalent qualification (important to note this is on the same academic level, but is not a Matric Certificate). If you fail Matric, you can also go to a TVET college to complete your Grade 12 as an artisan with a National Certificate Vocational (NVC) in a trade.

TVET COLLEGES: Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges (formerly FET colleges) provide practical, industry-orientated programmes that cater to the skills deficit in the country, such as building, agriculture and engineering. They offer programmes to youth who only have a Grade 9, as well as those with a Matric. Programmes range from short courses to full-time diploma programmes.

UNIVERSITIES & UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY (formerly Technikons): Depending on what they want to study, the young person must make sure they know what subjects they need, the grades the university requires, and if there are any other entrance requirements – a Matric certificate is not enough. Universities are also more costly, around R25 000-R30 000 per year. While NSFAS provides low-income learners with loans based on a financial means test, these loans do not cover all expenses.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

For a full breakdown of study options for youth with and without a Matric, go to www.jobstarter.co.za

For bursaries, encourage young people to visit www.bursaries2017.co.za and www.puffandpass.co.za

Share this article for a true-life account of life at university: <http://www.destinyman.com/2016/05/19/black-university-drop-rate-horrific/>

For a list of public TVET colleges, go to: <http://mobi.careerhelp.org.za/page/mobile/university-tvet/1659026-List-of-TVET-Colleges-within-South-Africa>