

# **The Power Source**

## **FACILITATOR MANUAL**

### **Sample Pages**



LIONHEART PRESS

**The Lionheart Foundation**

# Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life

## Introductory Guide

### Introduction and Overview

The immense challenges facing highly at-risk youth are apparent to virtually anyone who has worked with this population. Finding one's way in the world, developing a strong sense of self, and functioning productively in the community can be challenging enough for adolescents with every resource and support system available to them. But, for youth who may not be afforded "safety nets" from their families and communities, and whose lives may be chronically impacted by the intersections of race, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability status, or other marginalization, mastering these developmental tasks can be overwhelming.

During our decades of work with highly at-risk youth, we have witnessed their struggle to navigate the transition into adulthood. Despite the masks they wear, most of these young people are desperately seeking safety, guidance, support, connection, and inspiration from the adults they come in contact with. This is where the challenge is extended to all of us:

**How can we help youth increase their self-awareness,  
tap into their resilience, improve their ability to manage their behavior,  
and lead them toward discovering a sense of purpose and  
hopefulness about their futures in the short amount of time  
we have with them?**

### Power Source Overview

The material presented in this manual is modeled on the book and manual *Houses of Healing: A Prisoner's Guide to Inner Power and Freedom*, a course in emotional literacy skill-building based on a belief in the intrinsic dignity and worth of each person. Since 1988, the *Houses of Healing* program has been used in prisons and jails across the country. It involves equipping participants with the skills needed to read and understand the emotions that motivate their choices, perceptions, and feelings; practice self-regulation and stress management; and tackle often longstanding and

buried issues around trauma, self-worth, and grief. Although written for adults, *Houses of Healing* has been used by youth detention centers and juvenile justice programs over the years.

In response to requests for a program that addresses the unique developmental needs of high-risk adolescents and young adults, The Lionheart Foundation created *Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life*, and in 2003, launched The National Emotional Literacy Project for Youth-At-Risk. This initiative consists of two major programs, *Power Source (PS)* and *Power Source Parenting (PSP)*, a version of *PS* adapted specifically for teen parents. Importantly, and in contrast to the majority of behavioral interventions currently being disseminated, *Power Source* **was developed by clinicians who work directly with at-risk youth in a variety of settings**. It is a mix of empirically-backed, evidence-based interventions, coupled with real-world language, concepts, and stories directly from system-involved youth and adults.

When the Lionheart Foundation first published the book *Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life (PS)* to help youth impacted by trauma harness their inner-strength, resilience, and dignity, we were told over and over not to write a book because **“kids won’t read it.”** But since its publication, we’ve found just the opposite to be true. The Lionheart Foundation has received countless letters from youth who discovered through this book that **they are not alone with their pain and suffering**; that there are thousands of youth across the country who have been swept up in similar cycles of family violence, parental drug use and incarceration, and the toxic fallout of systemic oppression. And that many of these youth have **gone on to create decent and productive lives**. Through reading *Power Source*, many discovered, often for the first time, that a safe, hopeful, and stable life was possible for them as well.

I've seen a lot of s\*\*\* in my life and done a lot, but I never thought some book would change me. When I first got locked up I was out of control – stealing, fighting, drugging. I even hit the fence 4 different times at this juvenile hall to show the system and my friends that I do what I want and that's the way life is supposed to be lived. I was wrong. Now I realize my family has abandoned me. My dads doing life in prison and I need to change. Reading *Power Source* gave me hope and wisdom and goals. I'm changed and am working on getting college set up for when I get out. Thank you *Power Source*.

—Jason, 17 years old, Pittsburg, PA

The Power Source Program was created from the original *PS* book to empower at-risk youth from a variety of settings with the social, emotional, and behavioral skills associated with paths of healthy development and permanent disengagement from the prison pipeline. This evidence-based and widely embraced program is designed to help adolescents:

- Recognize the emotional, social, and situational factors that lead to high-risk behavior, including the link between trauma exposure and high-risk behaviors;
- Positively change core beliefs about themselves;
- Heal from histories of trauma;
- Develop health-promoting, prosocial behaviors to replace high-risk behaviors;
- Select positive peers and acquire the skills to maintain those relationships.
- Build skills to tolerate and manage distressing emotions such as anger, disrespect, shame, and fear with the goal of decreasing emotional reactivity;
- Reduce engagement in interpersonal violence;
- Increase inhibitory and attentional regulation skills;
- Identify individual and situational factors leading to substance use and learn alternative coping strategies;
- Increase interpersonal skills including managing conflict, repairing relationships, taking responsibility for one's actions, self-advocacy, and seeking help;
- Address offending and harmful behaviors, with a focus on perspective-taking, empathy development, taking accountability, apologizing, and making amends;
- Acquire the social and emotional skills associated with workplace readiness success;

Since its inception, The Power Source Program has been widely adopted across the country by agencies and individuals working with at-risk youth. While it was originally written for some of our nation's most marginalized and underserved youth—those involved in the juvenile justice system—we soon noticed that a wide-range of professionals, from schools serving trauma-impacted youth to community-based diversion programs, were using the program. The current Power Source Program is designed for **educators, mental health professionals, mentors, credible messengers, intervention specialists, outreach workers, direct care staff, and other youth workers** who offer educational and rehabilitative programming in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to: high schools serving trauma-impacted youth engaging in high-risk behaviors; secure and non-secure detention centers; diversion and alternative to incarceration programs; residential treatment centers and facilities; group homes; after school or community-based programs; and in adult prisons with 18-24 year old young people.

Today, the Power Source family of materials includes multiple options for intervention that can be used alone or together, allowing the program to be delivered in a highly flexible, user-friendly format depending on the needs and resources of your setting. All PS materials can be used with youth individually or in groups. Resources include:

- **The Power Source book** (for bibliotherapy) that contains the core PS skills interwoven with first-person stories from real youth and issues that are relevant and engaging to high-risk youth, written in both **English** and **Spanish**. For youth willing and able to read, copies of the book can be made available for them to work through at their own pace. Sections of the book, including the stories written by at-risk youth, can be read during group or individually.
- **Two fully manualized curriculums** for use both in groups and individually:
  - The first (this manual) is designed for youth aged 14-19, and can be used either as a short, 3-module intervention, or a longer, 15-module intervention. It is designed to be used flexibly and adaptively depending on the needs of your population, and along with the youth book and Workbook;
  - The second is a 13-module group facilitation manual, designed for young adults aged 20-25;
- **The Power Source Workbook** for youth that contains highly-engaging, one-page worksheets aimed to reinforce PS material;
- **The Power Source DVD series** for youth to watch that augments the curriculum. The DVD series addresses the core components of the program using real adolescents gaining insight into their lives and finding more adaptive solutions to deal with the issues that have led them to high-risk behavior;
- **The Power Source audiobook**: a recorded version of the *PS* book for youth, which can be found at <https://lionheart.org/power-source-book-audio-version/>;
- **A repository of recorded meditations** for use specifically with PS, which can be found on the Lionheart website at [www.lionheart.org/meditation/](http://www.lionheart.org/meditation/).

In addition to The Power Source Program, The Lionheart Foundation has developed a number of other programs that work in tandem with *PS*:

- **EQ2: Empowering Direct Care Staff to Create Trauma-Informed Communities for Youth** is an Emotion Coaching curriculum that helps staff deliver trauma-informed care by:
  - Increasing their understanding of how trauma impacts youth behavior;
  - Building their own social and emotional competency and self-regulation skills;
  - Strengthening their capacity to create reparative relationships with youth;
  - Helping to create and foster a culture that supports healing for youth and staff.

- **Power Source Parenting: Growing Up Strong and Raising Healthy Kids**, a trauma-informed, risk-reduction curriculum for adolescent parents.
- **Houses of Healing: A Prisoner’s Guide to Inner Power and Freedom**: a social-emotional curriculum for adult offenders.

### This Introductory Guide

Many people come into this work with an incredible knowledge base, and we respect and appreciate all that you bring, from wherever it may come. In efforts to ensure that everyone running groups has access to the information they’ll need, we have included theoretical and background material that spans across disciplines and content areas, as well as practical suggestions and instructions for how to run PS groups. We have also made efforts to connect a variety of theories and domains within this Guide to better facilitate understanding of the *Power Source* model and how the work that informs it fits together. With that said, you may come across content that is already familiar to you. We encourage you to refer to the sections in this Guide as you need them, but know that we understand that you may be well-versed in much of it.

In sum, we’ve tried to make this Intro Guide contain everything you’ll need to run a PS group from start to finish, regardless of previous training or background. Within this Guide, you’ll find information on how to:

- Introduce PS into your facility and ensure its success
- Screen youth for participation
- Set up and structure groups
- Embody PS “Facilitator Presence”
- Provide feedback on written work
- Manage challenging participants and scenarios
- Use creative adaptations and modifications to suit your population
- Structure role-plays and games
- Lead PS meditations
- Develop your own meditation practice

**For your reference, we’ve also created a repository of supplemental resources and exercises you can use for PS groups or individual work. These can be found at: <https://lionheart.org/ps-online-resources/>.**

Before moving forward, we’d like to point out an aspect of our language usage that you’ll see throughout this Guide and all of our Power Source modules. When we discuss youth, even in the singular, we use they/them/their as pronouns (e.g., “We

aim to let each youth know that we see their Core Self”). This invites the reader and facilitator to not automatically jump to conclusions about a person’s gender identity. We encourage you, as is fitting for your group, to also use this language and encourage de-stigmatization of gender-neutral language. For more information on the history, grammar, and usage of gender-neutral language, see our **Recommended Resources for Staff**. For materials to facilitate discussing these topics with youth, see our **Recommended Resources for Youth**. Both of these can be found in the PS Online Resources, listed above.