Motivation for how and why each intervention can affect aspirations

Basically, there is research on mental contrasting (Oettingen & Mayer, 2002) that demonstrates the risk of visualizing an aspirational future self without considering the realistic steps of how to arrive at such a future.  Daydreaming in a solely positive vein about the future has been shown to lead to worse future outcomes (re: job pursuit and academic attainment, among other things) than taking an approach which balances optimism about the future with realistically grounded expectations. Identifying barriers and how to overcome them is key.  In some ways, our role model intervention helps draw a map of expected barriers to success and ways to get past them – adding, in essence, the component of “how” to attain a desired future to the “what” of visualizing oneself in it. In addition, the consulting treatment can reinforce some of the “how”. Finally, both treatments can help with the “why” as both can help explain the benefits more clearly.

The other strand here is that the successful peers (and perhaps counseling) can make it vivid that present actions by shop owners do matter for the future and these interventions can make the opportunity cost of not paying attention more salient. Providing this context can increase engagement as it counteracts the well-document tendency to discount the future.

Here are some of the papers:

Hershfield, H.E. (2018). The Self Over Time. *Current Opinion in Psychology*.

Hershfield, H.E. & Bartels, D. (2018). The future self. In Oettingen, G., Sevincer, A.T., & Gollwitzer, P.M. (eds). *The Psychology of Thinking about the Future*(89-109). The Guilford Press.

Oettingen, G., & Mayer, D. (2002). The motivating function of thinking about the future: Expectations versus fantasies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(5), 1198