

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

Name of Program and Service: Abraxas - Leadership Development Program - ART

Cohort Total: 109

SPEP ID: 75-T1

Selected Timeframe: Apr. 1, 2013 – Sep. 1, 2014

Date(s) of Interview(s): Jul. 30, 2014, Aug. 14, 2014, Dec. 19, 2014

Lead County & SPEP Team Representatives: Tracie Davies, Lehigh Co. & Lisa Freese, EPISCenter

Person Preparing Report: Lisa Freese

Description of Service: *This should include a **brief** overview of the service within the context of the program, the location and if community based or residential. Indicate the type of youth referred, how the service is delivered, the purpose of service and any other **relevant** information to help the reader understand the SPEP service type classification. (350 character limit)*

Aggression Replacement Training® is a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help youth improve social skill competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger, and reduce aggressive behavior. The program consists of 26 weeks (30 sessions) of intervention training, and is divided into three components: social skills training, anger control training, and training in moral reasoning. Residents attend a one-hour session in each of these components each week. Not every youth receives the anger control component (based on need, referring agency preference, past history or length of stay), although about 95% of the residents do participate.

Moral reasoning is an open group, one hour in length with 8-12 clients. Staff pick one of the 40 different scenarios each week, which focuses on topics such as stealing, cheating, relationships and holding people accountable. Training in moral reasoning is designed to enhance youths' sense of fairness and justice regarding the needs and rights of others and to train youth to imagine the perspectives of others when they confront various moral problem situations. Youth complete the How I Think questionnaire (thinking errors and moral development), AQ aggression quotient (8-9 categories) which is self-reported, and skill streaming checklist where they rate themselves on each. No role plays occur, just question and answer. Anger control is a closed group and youth typically begin this component 2-3 weeks post admission. Pre-testing occurs at intake, post-testing at end of anger control at 10th week (How I Think questionnaire, AQ aggression quotient, and skill streaming checklist). Youth must bring to each session one or more descriptions of recent anger-arousing experiences, and over the duration of the program they are trained in how to respond to these experiences. They learn how their actions affect others and what their anger control cycle is and what they have learned to date. There are no more than 10 kids per group, occasionally 12, if absolutely necessary. The Skill Streaming component of ART is also an open group, with 8-12 clients. There are 50 pro-social skills, 26 are selected by staff. Some skills are basic while others are more complicated; for example, how to make a decision and how to deal with a difficult situation. The residents role play scenarios and get feedback from staff, peers and also do a self evaluation.

The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach participants to control impulsiveness and anger and resulting in using more appropriate behaviors. In addition, guided group discussion is used to correct antisocial thinking.

The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Cognitive-behavior Therapy

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? No

If so, what is the Service type? There is no qualifying supplemental service

Was the supplemental service provided? n/a Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 35

Total Points Earned: 35 Total Points Possible: 35

2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training and supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Earned: 20 Total Points Possible: 20

3. **Amount of Service:** Score was derived from examination of weeks and hours each youth in the cohort received the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP service categorization. Each SPEP service type has varying amounts of duration and dosage. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 6

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 4

Total Points Earned: 10 Total Points Possible: 20

4. **Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

81 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

19 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 5 points

Total Points Earned: 15 Total Points Possible: 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 80 total points awarded out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP therapeutic service. (eg: individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.

Program Optimization Percentage: 80% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (eg: individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research)

The SPEP and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service feedback report, and these recommendations are the focus of the performance improvement plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

1. Youth who receive the ART curriculum should be in the service for no less than 8 weeks with a minimum of 24 total hours for each of the 3 components. LDP staff should communicate with the juvenile courts about the recommended duration of ART, particularly with those jurisdictions where youth rarely receive 8 weeks of ART during their commitment to LDP.
2. Booster training should occur at regular intervals to ensure the service is delivered as intended.
3. Youth with high or moderate risk levels should be targeted for this curriculum.

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Reassessment

Name of Program and Service: Abraxas Youth and Family Services-Leadership Development Program-Aggression Replacement Training®-ART®

Cohort Total: 140/131 Risk Level _____ SPEP ID: 75-T02

Timeframe of Selected Cohort: Jan. 1, 2017 - Mar. 31, 2019

Date(s) of Interview(s): Dec. 11, 2018 & Mar. 6, 2019

Lead County & SPEP Team Representatives: Tracie Davies, Lehigh Co., Stacey Wellman, Franklin Co., Lisa Freese, EPISCenter

Person Preparing Report: Lisa Freese

Description of Service: *This should include a **brief** overview of the service within the context of the program, the location and if community based or residential. Indicate the type of youth referred, how the service is delivered, the purpose of service and any other **relevant** information to help the reader understand the SPEP service type classification. (500 word limit)*

The Abraxas Leadership Development Program (LDP) is an 88 bed residential program for male and female youth, ages 13 to 18 who are court committed, following an adjudication of delinquency. Referrals are accepted from all 67 counties in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and The District of Columbia. Successful completion of the program is approximately 6 months, however, stays can range from 4-8 months. Established in 1994, staff work with youth to instill leadership skills, training and other activities, including leadership positions and responsibilities. Individual Service Plans (ISP) include goals, services, daily groups, and family conferences; pro-social skills and vocational training through PACTT affiliation and restorative justice through restitution and community service. The Leadership Development Program also operates on the philosophy of trauma informed. Part of the curriculum includes the Leadership Experiential Adventure Program (L.E.A.P.). L.E.A.P. provides experiential learning opportunities, adventure-based programming, community service, restitution, vocational programming, and workforce development opportunities.

Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) is a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help youth improve social skill competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger, and reduce aggressive behavior. The program consists of 10 weeks (30 sessions) of intervention training, and is divided into three components: Skill Streaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training. The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach participants to control impulsiveness and anger and resulting in using more appropriate behaviors. In addition, guided group discussion is used to correct antisocial thinking. Residents attend a one-hour session in each of these components each week. All 3 components are closed groups with 8-10 clients in each group. Not every youth receives ART® (based on need, county, past history or length of stay), although about 95% of the residents do participate.

The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Cognitive-behavior Therapy

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? No

If so, what is the Service type? There is no qualifying supplemental service

Was the supplemental service provided? n/a Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 35

Total Points Earned: 35 Total Points Possible: 35

2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training and supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Earned: 10 Total Points Possible: 20

3. **Amount of Service:** Score was derived from examination of weeks and hours each youth in the cohort received the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP service categorization. Each SPEP service type has varying amounts of duration and dosage. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 8

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 8

Total Points Earned: 16 Total Points Possible: 20

4. **Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

108 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

37 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

Total Points Earned: 20 Total Points Possible: 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 81 total points awarded out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP therapeutic service. (eg: individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.

Program Optimization Percentage: 81% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (eg: individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research)

The SPEP and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service feedback report, and these recommendations are the focus of the performance improvement plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

The Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) service scored an 81 for the Basic Score and an 81% Program Optimization Percentage. These Basic scores and POP scores represent an increase of 1 point from the initial SPEP™ assessment. The service is classified as cognitive behavior therapy. The quality of service was found to be at a Medium Level. It is worth noting that the LDP administrators reported an unusually high amount of staff turnover since the baseline assessment. This has impacted the quality of service given the need to train staff quickly to maintain service delivery. For Amount of Service, 84% of the youth received the recommended targeted weeks of duration, and 80% of the youth received the recommended targeted contact hours for this service type. The risk levels of youth admitted to the program were: 7% Low Risk, 61% Moderate Risk, and 32% High Risk. The program could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction by addressing the following recommendations:

1. Quality of Service Delivery

a. Staff Training

- i. Provide in-house booster or refresher training for staff delivering Aggression Replacement Training® ART®.

b. Staff Supervision

- i. Ensure that the Fidelity Forms are utilized for delivery of every group and provide a copy to staff.
- ii. In performance reviews, address the delivery of Aggression Replacement Training® ART® specifically.

c. Organizational Response to Drift

- i. Create or provide evidence of policies that address drift from delivery of Aggression Replacement Training® ART®.
- ii. Document that the policy is utilized and include specific, corrective action steps that should be taken if drift occurs.
- iii. Ensure that supervisors or administrative staff are reviewing feedback from youth and/or data collected on Aggression Replacement Training® ART® to improve its effectiveness.