

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

SPEP™ ID and Time: 220-T01

Agency Name: Abraxas Youth and Family Service
Program Name: Leadership Development Program (LDP) Female Program
Service Name: Cognitive Development Group
Cohort Total: 25/23
Timeframe of Selected Cohort: December 1, 2016 –November 30, 2017
Referral County(s): Lehigh, Allegheny, Bucks, Crawford, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Fayette, Lebanon, Lycoming, Mercer, Monroe, Montgomery, Northumberland, Washington and York
Date(s) of Interview(s): October 20, 2017, November 28, 2017 and April 18, 2018
Lead County: Lehigh County
Probation Representative(s): Tracie Davies
EPIS Representative: Lisa Freese

Description of Service:

The Abraxas Leadership Development Program (LDP) is an 88 bed open residential program for males (64) and females (24) youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who have been court committed to the program, following an adjudication of delinquency and/or dependency. Referrals are accepted from all 67 counties throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and referrals are also accepted from West Virginia, Maryland and The District of Columbia. The program is designed to last approximately 6 months; however, most youth average a 4 month stay. Similarly, some youth may stay as long as 8 months, in order to address a specific request by the court. The program was established in 1994, and through the Leadership Curriculum, staff work with youth to instill leadership skills, training and other activities as well as the opportunity to earn leadership positions and responsibilities. The Leadership Development Program is based on Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) by providing victim awareness through the development of an Individual Service Plan (ISP) which includes goals, services, daily groups and family conferences; competency development through pro-social skills and vocational training and restorative justice through restitution and community service. The Leadership Development Program also operates on the philosophy of trauma informed care through the Sanctuary Model. Part of the LDP program 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 for youth (taken from brochure). It is accredited by the Association for Experiential Education. During the SPEP interviews which occurred on October 20, 2017 and November 28, 2017, as many as 14 services were identified, of which were eligible to go through the SPEP process. This report focuses on the Cognitive Development Group one of the five services that were chosen for the SPEP process. All clients at LDP receive the Cognitive Development Group for the length of their commitment. The Cognitive Development Group is a cognitive behavioral intervention that was developed by Dr. Stanton E. Samenow book "Inside the Criminal Mind". The purpose of the group is to help youth recognize their thinking errors and how to appropriately apply correctives to those errors to make better decisions. Clients learn to be more self-aware and recognize the consequences of their actions that result from the thinking errors they have. The correctives applied are reinforced through practical application that occurs during programming. The group is held once a week for one hour. It is an open group. There are 36 out of 52 pre-selected topics to choose from such as Anger, Concrete Thinking, Fear of Put Down, and Right from Wrong. Typically, the topic for the week is selected by the Clinical Services Director Michelle Nolan. There is a binder on each unit that contains the lesson plans for each topic. Each lesson plan contains an outline for each topic: overview, objective/goals, materials, structure, norms, and activities/lesson plan. The instructors of the group, typically tie the topic into the client's clinical work. Instructors may provide extra material to make the topic more relevant to the group dynamics. Approximately 90% of the topics have some type of handout that is given. Instructors may attempt to relate the topic on a situation within the unit. The situation is processed on the thinking error and the group discusses how this impacts all involved.

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

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Cognitive Behavioral 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 Received: 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, staff supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Received: 5 Total Points Possible: 20

3. Amount of Service: Score was derived by calculating the total number of weeks and hours received by each youth in 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 contact hours. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 4

Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours: 0

Total Points Received: 4 **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.

21/23 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

8/23 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 13 points

Total Points Received: 23 **Total Points Possible:** 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 67 total points received out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP™ therapeutic service. (e.g. 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: 67% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (e.g. 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 juvenile probation department.

The Cognitive Development Group service scored a 67 for the Basic Score and a 67% Program Optimization Percentage. It is classified as a Cognitive-behavioral Therapy service type. The program could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction through:

I. Service Quality

a. Written Protocol:

- i. Develop a manual that describes the Cognitive Development Group.
- ii. The manual should be reviewed yearly (or at some pre-determined timeframe) to ensure that the information is relevant to the identified population.

b. Staff Training:

- i. Develop a specific training for the Cognitive Development Group that provides direction to staff on the delivery of each lesson plan.
- ii. Provide documentation that staff are trained to deliver the service, and include the supervisors.
- iii. Provide booster/refresher training on the service delivery at pre-determined timeframes.

c. Staff Supervision:

i. Develop a supervision process to include:

- ii. A pre-determined schedule to observe service delivery to ensure consistency of supervision across the Counselors/YD Specialists.
- iii. The supervision observation should include documentation or tracking.
- iv. Written feedback provided to staff by the supervisor.
- v. Creation of a specific evaluation of the Cognitive Development Group in the performance evaluation.

d. Response to Drift:

- i. Develop policies or procedures to identify departure from delivery protocol for the Cognitive Development Group.
- ii. Ensure the policies include a specific if-then-approach to address drift in service delivery.
- iii. Develop documentation to verify these processes were implemented as written.
- iv. Evaluate the effectiveness of the group through outcome data to enhance service delivery, such as pre-and posttests or youth surveys.

2. Amount of Service:

- a. Communicate the targeted 15 weeks of a cognitive behavioral intervention, based on the meta-analysis findings. This can occur at referral and during court hearings.
- b. Explore ways to increase the number of hours or dosage each resident receives of the group. 45-hours is the targeted duration.