

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

SPEP™ ID and Time: 219-T01

Agency Name: Abraxas Youth and Family Service  
Program Name: Leadership Development Program (LDP) Female Program  
Service Name: Leadership Experiential Adventure Program (LEAP)  
Cohort Total: 21/20  
Timeframe of Selected Cohort: December 1, 2016 –November 30, 2017  
Referral County(s): Allegheny, Bucks, Crawford, Dauphin, Erie, Fayette, Lebanon, Lehigh, Lycoming, Mercer, Montgomery, Northumberland, Washington, & York  
Date(s) of Interview(s): February 6, 2018  
Lead County: Lehigh County  
Probation Representative(s): Tracie Davies, Lehigh Co. & Sue Christner, Lebanon Co.  
EPIS Representative: Lisa Freese & Heather Perry

## Description of Service:

The Abraxas Leadership Development Program (LDP) is an 88 bed open residential program for male (64) and female (24) youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who have been court committed to the program, following an adjudication of delinquency. Referrals are accepted from all 67 counties throughout PA and referrals are also accepted from WV, MD, and DC. 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, 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 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 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, twelve of which were eligible to go through the SPEP process. This report focuses on L.E.A.P., one of the five services that were chosen to be assessed. The Leadership Experiential Adventure Program (L.E.A.P.) is accredited by the Association for Experiential Education and connects adventure-based activities to clinical learning. Specially trained and accredited staff teach youth individual responsibility, accountability and character development through their participation in experiential education and adventure activities. As part of the clinical experience, youth may participate in some or all of the following activities: low ropes course, high ropes course, zip line, hiking and rock climbing, canoeing and educational field trips. While some L.E.A.P. activities occur on campus, youth participating in this service are also practice and apply their skills on trips along the Appalachian Trail and Laurel Lake. Community connections, team building and trust are a focus of many L.E.A.P. activities and are reinforced during weekly leadership groups.

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

### 1. SPEP™ Service Type: Challenge Programs

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? Yes

If so, what is the Service Type? Group Counseling

Was the supplemental service provided? Yes      Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 20

Total Points Received: 20      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: 20      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:** 10

**Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours:** 2

**Total Points Received:** 12 **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.

18/20 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

7/20 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

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 75 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:** 89% 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.)

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### **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 Leadership Experiential Adventure Program (L.E.A.P.) scored a 75 for the Basic Score and an 89% Program Optimization Percentage. It is classified as a Group 3 Skill Building service-Challenge Program, with a qualifying supplemental service of Group Counseling. The quality of the service was found to be at a high level. 90% of youth represented in the cohort were above low risk, with 35% high or very high risk; 100% of youth met the targeted service amount duration and 19% met the targeted dosage. The program could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction through:

#### 1. Quality of Service

- a. Enhance the written protocol/manual by establishing and including within the document the target population best suited for this service.
- b. Enhance the current monitoring policy by establishing a written policy that identifies and articulates the predetermined frequency (weekly, monthly, etc.) of formal supervisory monitoring of staff adherence to service policies and protocols.
- c. Develop procedures to aid in the identification and documentation of staff departure from service policies and protocols, to include specific corrective actions/measures to be utilized using an if-then approach to drift.

#### 2. Regarding Amount of Service:

- a. Continue to improve communication with Juvenile Probation Departments using this service regarding the research-supported amount of service recommended for this service type.