

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

Name of Program and Service: Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. - Thinking for a Change (T4C)

Cohort Total: 31

SPEP ID: 68-T1

Selected Timeframe: Aug. 1, 2012 - Aug. 31, 2013

Date(s) of Interview(s): Oct. 28, 2013

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)*

Thinking for a Change (T4C) operated by Justice Works YouthCare, Inc. is a community-based program for youth in Lehigh County who are at moderate to high risk of re-offending. Thinking for a Change was developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and it concentrates on changing the criminogenic thinking of offenders. T4C is a cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) service that includes cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and the development of problem-solving skills. T4C stresses interpersonal communication skills development and confronts thought patterns that can lead to problematic behaviors. The program has three components: cognitive self-change, social skills, and problem-solving skills. Lessons on cognitive self-change provide participants with a thorough process for self-reflection concentrated on uncovering antisocial thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Social skills lessons prepare participants to engage in prosocial interactions based on self-understanding and awareness of the impact that their actions may have on others.

Justice Works T4C is only for Lehigh County youth who are under juvenile probation supervision. They accept male or female offenders who are typically 12-18 yrs of age, with an average age of 16. Male and female groups run separately, and the groups are only conducted in English. Although there was no written documentation, JusticeWorks staff reported that T4C addresses the following YLS Domains: Personality/Behavior, Attitudes/Orientation and Substance Abuse. Each client is given a workbook to follow the curriculum, which also includes a Pre and Post test "How I think" that measures thinking patterns. The overall purpose of T4C is to learn how thinking controls their behavior, learn about their beliefs, and how their thought process got them into trouble and overall how to make better decisions.

Staff includes a Program Director and 2 Family Resource Specialists (FRS). According to NIC, T4C is a 12 week service consisting of 25 lessons (one hour each) twice per week. JusticeWorks offers the curriculum once per week for a 2 hour session (makeup sessions are held immediately prior to the scheduled session) for 10 weeks. The groups are held at the Lehigh County Courthouse, which is more centrally located to participants, ensuring a better attendance rate. JusticeWorks staff co-facilitate each group, providing transportation to participants as needed.

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: 0

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 0

Total Points Earned: 0 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.

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

2 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 0 points

Total Points Earned: 10 Total Points Possible: 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 65 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: 65% 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. Increase the duration of weeks of service to be no less than 15 weeks. This can be accomplished by review of specific lessons or curriculum, a practice supported by the developer, where it supports or reinforces concepts that were taught.
2. Increase the dosage or number of contact hours to be no less than 45 total hours. This can be accomplished by allowing a minimum of 1.5 hours per lesson or lesson/concept review over the course of 15 weeks. Increasing the “make up” session to a minimum of 1.5 hours as opposed to one hour would also assist in meeting this threshold.
3. Track recidivism after discharge at specific intervals, for example, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year.
4. Development of a policy or protocol that clearly specifies the intended or target population that would benefit most from Thinking for a Change.