

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

SPEP™ ID and Time: 0313-T01

Agency Name: Abraxas Youth and Family Services

Program Name: Abraxas Academy

Service Name: Behavior Management System (BMS)

Cohort Total: 19

Timeframe of Selected Cohort: March 1, 2020 - February 28, 2021

Referral County(s): Bedford (2); Berks (2); Bradford (2); Bucks (1); Delaware (3); Erie (4);

Lackawanna (1); Lehigh (1); Luzerne (2); Westmoreland (1)

Date(s) of Interview(s): Dec 3, 2020 & March 18, 2021

Lead County: Lancaster

Probation Representative(s): Cheri Modene, Director, Lancaster County Juvenile Probation

EPIS Representative: Dawn Karoscik

Description of Service:

Abraxas Academy provides intensive treatment to adolescents and their families who are experiencing severe emotional, behavioral, psychological, educational and social problems. Clients must be court adjudicated males between the age of 14-18. Youth must be in 9th grade, level of violence as a factor, dramatically high risk for suicidal behavior, especially recent attempts. Psychotic features will also be reviewed. IQ of 70 or higher. The Abraxas Academy has two secure residential programs, the Habitual Offenders Program and the Sexual Offenders Program.

The Habitual Offenders Program uses a comprehensive approach in providing treatment services to the residents. This is achieved through trauma informed cognitive behavioral therapy with a strong emphasis on functional behavior assessment and behavioral modification. The program milieu and curriculum utilize the principles of BARJ, an anger and emotional curriculum intertwined, Applied Behavioral Analysis and a cognitive distortions component. Treatment emphasis is placed on identifying and correcting potentially harmful patterns of thought, improving social skills, teaching problem solving skills and developing an awareness of the community and victim, while altering target pro-social and maladaptive behaviors.

There are 3 treatment tracks that are provided for youth; 3-months, 6-months, 10-months. The track is a collaborative decision made by Abraxas Academy, referring Juvenile Probation Department, and the Courts. Youth are afforded all treatment modalities but depending on the track, delivery and dosage amounts of the service will vary.

Abraxas Academy's Behavior Management System is a level system that allows youth to earn privileges as they progress through the program with an incentive-based level system. Residents earn incentives, privileges and consequences in accordance with their behavior. The system is based on recognizing and rewarding strengths within adolescents and providing immediate coaching and development within the milieu. There are four levels in total and all residents start on level one with basic privileges. Residents are required to complete a presentation to advance to each level. At the end of each level presentation, staff can ask questions or quiz on a subject matter pertaining to their treatment. In addition to the presentation youth must also be passing all classes, exhibiting positive behavior on the unit, and showing engagement and progress in their clinical work. After the youth has reached the final level they are required to present a conclusive presentation that includes the story of their life with disclosure of trauma and the crimes they committed, along with what they've learned at the Academy and their relapse prevention plan. A model resident can make highest level within 3 months. There is also recognition given to "Resident of the Week" which are residents that are selected from each unit to earn extra tokens and privileges based upon how well their behaviors were that week.

Each floor has a representative that meets with staff once or twice per month to discuss quality of life and consistency on unit, relationship between staff and youth; request for books, movies etc. for the token economy store. Youth remain in the position until discharge, or can be removed because of issues/behavior that don't reflect the stature of the position. As part of the accountability piece, residents who exhibit community violations or violate the Seven Sanctuary Commitments may receive a variety of measurable and logical consequences relating to the expectation or Seven Commitments. For more serious consequences, Community Agreements or contracts are created between the resident and Academy community. Meetings occur 3 times per week to assess what clinical assignments would benefit a youth to correct a particular behavior. Certain behaviors can cause kids to lose their level. Each level has a certain number of tokens tied to it. Positive behaviors in the unit and the display of progressive investment in treatment will allow for youth to earn tokens. Youth are permitted to purchase items from the Token Economy Store with the tokens they earn.

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

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Behavioral Management

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

If so, what is the Service Type? Remedial Academic Program

Was the supplemental service provided? Yes **Total Points Possible for this Service Type:** 30

Total Points Received: 30 **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: 2
Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours: 4

Total Points Received: 6 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.

19 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of youth 12 points
6 in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

Total Points Received: 22 Total Points Possible: 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 78 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: 82% 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 service could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction by addressing the following recommendations:

1. Regarding Quality of Service Delivery:

a. Staff Training:

i. Ensure that staff receive specific training to deliver the service and that it is documented when completed.

b. Staff Supervision:

i. Reference the quality of service delivery in the competency assessments.

2. Regarding Amount of Service:

a. Identify opportunities to capture contact hours per week to better match research recommendations for the target amount of service.