

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

SPEP™ ID and Time: 0320-T01

Agency Name: JusticeWorks Family of Services, Inc.  
Program Name: JusticeWorks Family of Services, Inc. – Berks Office  
Service Name: Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®)  
Cohort Total: 31  
Timeframe of Selected Cohort: August 5, 2019 - January 31, 2021  
Referral County(s): Berks  
Date(s) of Interview(s): April 8, 2021 and May 12, 2021  
Lead County: Berks  
Probation Representative(s): Bill Keim, Assistant Chief  
EPIS Representative: Lisa Freese

## Description of Service:

The Berks County JusticeWorks Family of Services office opened its door in 2008 providing services to juvenile justice-involved families through services that meet varying social and community needs. Services started with their Violation Initiative Program (VIP) that focused on identifying and navigating community resources relevant to youth and family needs, as well as skill building to allow for new adaptive behaviors to help build viable and long-term skills. Other services provided include: Voices, a program of self-discovery and empowerment for girls is a program for self-discovery and empowerment for girls who gave experienced substance abuse or trauma related to abuse. The program advocates a strength-based approach that helps girls to identify and apply their power and voices as individuals and as a group. Casework Counseling is similar to VIP in that casework and skill building services are provided to those families who may need minimal or brief assistance in meeting their probation goals. The Reintegration Service is family-focused and begins at court when a youth is referred to placement. While the youth is in placement, the Reintegration Specialist will assist the family with case management, transportation, video conferencing parenting and in-person visits with the youth and regular contact with the treatment team. Parenting covers topics such as teen behavior, constructive communication, and consequences and rewards. PACTT affiliate/OVR IL group: The Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training (PACTT) Alliance Employability/Soft Skills Manual (ESSM) provides guidance and uniformity to the work-ready training activities offered to delinquent youth. The identified competencies represent an important foundation for a youth's employability skills training. Through our PACTT affiliation, JusticeWorks also has the ability to offer an independent living skills group to those youth who meet OVR/BJJS criteria (funded through OVR).

The focus of this report is Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®), an evidence-based curriculum proven to help juveniles reduce aggressive behavior and develop pro-social and moral reasoning skills. ART® is a multimodal psycho-educational intervention designed to alter the behavior of chronically aggressive adolescents and young children. The program incorporates three specific interventions: Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training.

- Skillstreaming uses modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and transfer training to teach pro-social skills.
- Anger Control Training requires participating youth to bring one or more descriptions of recent anger-arousing experiences (hassles) to each session. Over the duration of the program, youth are trained in how to respond to their hassles.
- Moral Reasoning Training is designed to enhance youths' sense of fairness and justice regarding the needs and rights of others. It is also designed to train youth to imagine the perspectives of others when they confront various moral problem situations.

ART® consists of a 10-week, 30-hour intervention administered to groups of 8 to 12 youth three times weekly. During these 10 weeks, participating youth typically attend three 1-hour sessions per week, one session each of Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training. The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach participants to control impulsiveness and anger, resulting in using more appropriate behaviors. In addition, guided group discussion is used to correct antisocial thinking. Differences exist regarding the targeted duration (i.e., weeks) and dosage (i.e., contact hours) for the delivery of ART® in a residential program versus delivery of ART® in a community-based program.

## 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:** 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:** 6  
**Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours:** 6

**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.

30 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of youth 12 points  
8 in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 8 points

**Total Points Received:** 20 **Total Points Possible:** 25

**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 87 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:** 87% 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.

ART® received an 87 for the Basic Score and an 87% Program Optimization Percentage. It was classified as a Group 5 service; Cognitive-behavioral Therapy Service Type. There is no qualifying supplemental service found in the research. The Quality of Service Delivery was found to be at a high Level. For Amount of Service, 71% of the youth received the recommended targeted weeks of duration and 68% of the youth received the recommended targeted contact hours for this service type. The Risk Levels of Youth admitted to the service were: 3% low risk, 71% moderate risk, 26% high risk, and 0% very high risk. The service could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction by addressing the following recommendations:

#### 1. Regarding Quality of Service Delivery:

##### a. Written Protocol:

- i. Check with the developer at a predetermined timeframe (such as annually) regarding changes/updates to the curriculum, and document the date.

##### b. Staff Training:

- i. Provide documentation that staff have received the ART® training.
- ii. Develop a mechanism for routine booster training related to ART® and document training as it occurs.

##### c. Staff Supervision:

- i. Establish a schedule of group observation and provide documentation when it occurs.

##### d. Organizational Response to Drift:

- i. Utilize the pre and post-tests and attendance sheets for evaluation of service delivery until an agency evaluation process is in place.

#### 2. Regarding Amount of Service:

- a. In collaboration with Berks County Juvenile Probation, investigate ways to improve attendance, which will assist with dosage.

\*It should be noted, however, that part of the service delivery was occurring during a pandemic which impacted attendance.