

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

*Service Score Results:* Baseline

**Name of Program and Service:** Abraxas - Lehigh Valley Comm. Based Programs - ART  
Cohort Total: 90 SPEP ID: 78-T1  
Selected Timeframe: May 14, 2013 – Dec. 31, 2014  
Date(s) of Interview(s): Feb. 24, 2015  
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)*

Aggression Replacement Training® (ART) is a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help children and adolescents improve social skill competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger, and reduce aggressive behavior. The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach youth to control impulsiveness and anger; resulting in more appropriate behavior. In addition, guided group discussion is used to correct antisocial thinking.

The Lehigh ART service is a closed group delivered once a week for 10 weeks. Sessions are 2.25 hours long per Lehigh County request. Referrals are only accepted from Lehigh County Juvenile Probation. Participation in ART is typically court ordered. Karen Hammer, Group Coordinator for the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Office, assesses the referrals and identifies youth who are considered low risk to recidivate (per the YLS), but are identified as in need of anger control. These youth are referred to an internal cognitive behavioral therapy (JPO run service), where moderate and high risk youth are referred to the Abraxas ART group. In addition to risk level, age and other factors are considered when making referrals. There are 6-12 youth in a group, however on average the typical size is 8-9 youth per group. The age range is 12-17 but most youth are ages 14-16. Groups can include both male and female youth. Abraxas Program Director Ryan Schoeneberger and Ms. Hammer coordinate the start and end date of the closed groups.

**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: 6

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 0

Total Points Earned: 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.

70 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 7 points

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

Total Points Earned: 7 Total Points Possible: 25

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 68 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:** 68% 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)

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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 local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

1. The manual utilized by Abraxas should identify the type of youth best served (using the language of the YLS screening tool) by Aggression Replacement Training®.
2. Booster training should occur at regular intervals to ensure the service is delivered as intended.
3. A co-facilitator should be utilized for each group session, and the most recent version of the Fidelity Forms, as part of the curriculum, should be completed on each of the three components.
4. Youth who receive the ART curriculum should be in the service for no less than 8 weeks with a minimum of 24 total hours for each of the 3 components combined.
5. Youth with high or moderate risk levels should be targeted for this curriculum.
6. Abraxas Lehigh Valley should develop feedback forms for youth and parents, to assess the effectiveness of the service.

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

## Service Score Results: Reassessment

Name of Program and Service: Abraxas - Lehigh Valley Comm. Based Programs - ART  
Cohort Total: 35 SPEP ID: 78-T02  
Selected Timeframe: Mar. 1, 2016 – Jul. 31, 2017  
Date(s) of Interview(s): August 4, 2017  
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)*

Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) is a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help children and adolescents improve social skill competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger, and reduce aggressive behavior. The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach youth to control impulsiveness and anger; resulting in more appropriate behavior. In addition, guided group discussion is used to correct antisocial thinking.

The Lehigh ART® service is a closed group delivered twice a week for 10 weeks. Sessions are 1.5 hours long per Lehigh County request. Referrals are only accepted from Lehigh County Juvenile Probation. Participation in ART® is typically court ordered; groups include males and females. There are 6-12 youth in a group, however on average the typical size is 8-9 youth per group. The age range is 12-17 but most youth are ages 14-16. Abraxas Program Director Ryan Schoeneberger and Ms. Hammer coordinate the start and end date of the closed groups. At the onset of ART® each client is asked to complete a questionnaire on Violence Prevention as a means to identify problem areas. Each session begins with the anger control piece for the 1st hour, the youth then receive a social skills lesson and then the session ends with moral reasoning. Clients are also expected to complete a weekly social moral reflection measure-short form which is a community behavioral report as well as hassle log for the anger control training, skills homework report for social skills training and a problem situation scenario for the moral reasoning training component. Each client is required to complete a minimum of 18 sessions in order to successfully complete the group. Parents are encouraged to show up to the first group (for a brief discussion either 5 minutes before or 5 minutes afterward); they ask that the parents provide any relevant information in regard to their child's anger issues that may be addressed in the group. An ART® goal is to have each client tie together how anger control relates to their social skills and then tie into their own life experiences. At the end of each session, the information delivered is applied to "real life scenarios". Each session the facilitator completes a fidelity form, which describes what was accomplished for each of the three sections. The fidelity forms are sent to Ms. Hammer weekly. Facilitator reports are sent to the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Office as well, which describe in a narrative format, what occurred in group each session. Also, a social skills training evaluation checklist is completed bi-weekly on each client and placed in the client's folder. These folders are open for review by the supervising probation officer.

### 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: 6

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 6

Total Points Earned: 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.

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

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

Total Points Earned: 12 Total Points Possible: 25

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 79 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:** 79% 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)

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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 local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

The ART® program scored a 79 for the Basic Score and a 79% Program Optimization Percentage. It is classified as a cognitive behavioral therapy service type. These scores represent an increase of 11 points from the baseline findings of the initial SPEP™ scoring results. The program could continue to improve its capacity for recidivism reduction through:

1. For service delivery drift, consider developing an internal policy or amending the corporate policy to include specific, corrective action steps related to ART®.
2. Continue to collaborate with the juvenile probation department to improve attendance of ART® participants, which will also result in an increase in dosage.