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Approved:	Cynthia K. Walcott, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 8/14/2009
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PURPOSE

To describe how youth are screened, assessed and re-assessed for risk and protective factors and how risk assessment informs case planning.

Definitions

Screening: a process in which clients are identified according to characteristics that indicate their risk to reoffend. Screening identifies a risk level of low, moderate or high. Moderate or high risk youth are in need of a more in depth assessment.

Assessment: a process in which an individual’s strengths, weaknesses, problems and needs are identified in order to develop an in-depth understanding of their risk to reoffend in order to establish goal for case planning.

“WHAT WORKS”

The “What Works” research indicates that interventions that are built on the Principles of Effective Interventions¹ are more likely to have the greatest impact. Such programs have a direct impact on recidivism.

The Principles of Effective Interventions are:

1. The Risk Principle:
 - Delinquent or acting out behavior can be predicted.
 - Intensity of treatment services should be matched to the risk level of the client. High risk clients require more intensive and extensive services while low risk clients require minimal or no intervention

2. The Need Principle:
 - It is critical to identify the needs that are also risk factors that can be linked to delinquent behavior.

1 (Palmer, 1995; Clear, 1981; Taxman & Byrne, 2001; Currie, 1998; Petersilia, 1997, 2002, Andrews & Bonta, 1998)

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- The identified risk/needs factors that are dynamic or changeable (e.g. attitudes, values, and behaviors) should serve as the appropriate targets for intervention.

3. **The Responsivity Principle:**

- The delivery of effective treatment programs in a style and mode that is consistent with the ability and learning style of the clients.

4. **The Program Integrity Principle:**

- Staff who deliver interventions to youth require supports including:
- Policies and procedures that include ethical guidelines and standards of professional conduct
 - Ongoing supervision and technical support
 - Training and awareness
 - Adequate resources for sustaining integrity

The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument

The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) is an evidenced-based risk and needs assessment and case planning tool. The domains of the tool are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ○ Legal History | ○ Mental Health |
| ○ Family | ○ Aggression |
| ○ School | ○ Attitudes |
| ○ Community and Peers | ○ Skills (social/cognitive) |
| ○ Alcohol and Drugs | ○ Employment and Free Time |

The YASI includes a Pre-Screen and Full Assessment. The Pre-Screen represents roughly one-third of the Full Assessment items. The Pre-Screen is designed to assess immediate risk at low, moderate or high. It does not assess for risk or protective factors in each individual domain. The Pre-Screen is not appropriate as a screening tool for mental health or substance abuse. However the Full Screen can be used as a screening tool for mental health and substance abuse. Neither the Full Screen or the Pre-Screen are appropriate as substance abuse or mental health assessment tools.

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Screening and Assessment

Screening and assessment is a collaborative process involving the social worker, the youth and the family. The youth’s view of themselves, their strengths and issues of concern play a key role.

Gaining a clear view of how the youth and the family function as a system, including their structure, boundaries, patterns of communication, and any intergenerational features of the family system facilitates the design of a plan of services that accurately addresses relevant issues.

The social worker must recognize and acknowledge that the youth and their families have expertise about their strengths and needs. The social worker should help the youth and their family to see and use the strengths that they possess and acknowledge that the greatest power for change lies within the youth and his/her family, not in other helping systems. Knowledge of and about the youth’s ethnicity and culture is important to develop a clear understanding of the meaning of the youth’s behaviors, the family’s interactions, the family’s child rearing practices and the family’s relationship to support systems.

Gathering information from a variety of sources will increase the accuracy of the assessment:

- Motivational interviews with the youth and family members, individually and/or together;
- Review of written materials, such as school reports, psychological evaluation, accessible data, etc.
- Collateral interviews with other service providers and individuals who know the youth;

POLICY

Social Worker Tasks for Risk Assessment

When a social worker has been assigned a case with a youth, he or she will:

1. Review any available written materials or data relevant to the assessment. All written materials and social worker notes will become part of the case file.
2. Conduct motivational interviews with the youth, the family, and any other service providers and individuals who know the youth and family.

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3. Complete a Pre-Screen prior to disposition.
 - All Pre-Screens results which indicate low risk must become part of the case record. Applying a Full Assessment once a Pre-Screen has indicated low risk may be done only with supervisor or designee approval.
 - If the Pre-Screen determines that the risk is low, the pre-screen results along with the Conditions of Probation from the court, and referrals made to balanced and restorative justice services shall suffice as the case plan when the youth is not in custody and the court is not requiring a full disposition case plan.
4. Complete a Full Assessment on all cases in which the Pre-Screen indicated moderate or high risk.
 - All moderate and high risk Pre-Screen results require a Full Assessment. On rare occasions, an override may take place when a Pre-Screen has indicated moderate or high risk. To request an override, the social worker shall forward the moderate or high risk Pre-Screen results and collateral information to a supervisor, a district director or designees who shall conduct a second review. After review, the social worker shall determine if the override is appropriate. Any decision to override must be entered into the case file with an explanation for the override.
 - The Full Assessment and dispositional case plan must be completed within 35 days after the date of the merits hearing.
5. Once a risk assessment is complete, the social worker must work with the youth and family to jointly create a disposition case plan and subsequent case plans.
6. Submits assessment including case plan, when completed, to supervisor for review. A new case plan must be created within 60 days of custody and updated every six months.

Re-assessment

Reassessment allows us to identify if risk and/or protective factors have decreased or increased in any of the ten domains. During reassessment, YASI will populate with the last assessment that was completed on the youth. Indicate what changes have taken place since the last assessment by making changes to any of the answers to the multiple choice questions. Obviously, only dynamic factors will change. YASI will calculate the most recent risk and protective factor scores.

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Reassessment must be done prior to closing cases of Moderate or higher risk and when a youth:

- Commits a new delinquency, or
- Every 6 months for case planning.

Reassessment may be done at any time during an open case, particularly when a youth engages in an escalating pattern of risky behaviors.

Six Month Case Plan Review and Case Closure

The following tables should be used at each six month anniversary from the date of adjudication and when considering case closure.

PROBATION CONDITIONS	RISK LEVEL	ACTION
Complete	Low	Close case
Complete	Low Moderate	Consult about case closure.
Complete	Moderate or higher	Reassess, if risk has decreased, consult with supervisor about case closure. If risk has remained the same or increased, adjust case plan as needed.

PROBATION CONDITIONS	RISK LEVEL	ACTION
Incomplete	Low	Adjust case plan as needed.
Incomplete	Low Moderate	Reassess and adjust case plan as needed.
Incomplete	Moderate or higher	Reassess and adjust case plan as needed.

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Supervisory Tasks

- Assists the worker in resolving any difficult issues related to the assessment and case planning process.
- Reviews completed plan and recommends any needed changes.
- Enters date of case plan into Supervisory Tracking Form.
- Review all cases with an escalating or continuing pattern of risky behavior.
- Annually develops, reviews and implements a quality assurance plan.