Intervention Work with High-Risk Young People:

Foundational Elements, Guiding Principles, Ideas,
and Questions for Discussion

Roca

Truth, Trust & Transformation

A Report by Police Officers, Youth Workers, and DYS Officials

This document was a collaborative effort of a small group of individuals possessing extensive experience working with our most at-risk young people ages 14-24. We came together to talk because we wanted to get better at helping young people to stay alive and make the changes they need to get out of violence. This document covers our conversations, homework and discussions about the issues that most concern us – the issues that keep us up at night. We appreciate that there are other groups of people doing the same type of work, and by no means did we mean to offend others by excluding them from this process; we received a commitment from this small group to put in the time, and we wanted to act immediately.

We saw a need – a need for more learning about what works and what does not work when implementing intervention strategies with this challenging group of young people living in harm's way – and we came together to take the first few steps toward meeting that need. We did not always agree, and if any one of us had written this document alone, it would probably be much different. Because it was written by police officers, DYS workers, and youth workers, that is the voice you will hear. We realize that there are many topics to cover with a challenging population like this – the overwhelming need to address trauma, the lengths people go to hide shame, young parent issues, gender issues, cultural issues, engagement issues, etc. – and although we did not explore each of these in depth, we hope the general framework we present is a helpful starting point in addressing young people's overall needs.

If you find it helpful, great. If it inspires dialogue and debate, great. There may be parts that you find controversial or sections with which you may disagree, and we also welcome that. For things to improve, systems, organizations, agencies, and individuals (including ourselves!) have to change. The change process is hard, but we can only improve if we take the time to look at ourselves, to learn new things and apply them, and to continue to measure outcomes and reevaluate our efforts. We hope this document serves as inspiration to do just that. Young people are worth it.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this document is to provide a framework for intervention work with young people ages 14-24 who are currently involved in violence, delinquency, substance abuse, and other harmful behaviors. It is a collaborative effort of various individuals who currently work in the intervention field. **This document is not meant to be completely comprehensive; rather, it is meant to initiate important dialogue regarding strategies for improving our work with high-risk young people.** We welcome feedback and the opportunity for further discussion and learning.

This document defines *intervention*, brings together best practices and ideas from both the experiences of key leaders in the Greater Boston area and from independent research, addresses the serious challenges facing the work with this challenging population, and asks provocative questions. It provides perspectives from community-based youth work, law enforcement, and juvenile justice. We sometimes lay out the elements of intervention work that we feel are necessary for success, and at other times we pose questions in order to inspire discussion.

Intervention is an important component on the criminal and juvenile justice continua. Intervention strategies aim to help individuals who are already involved in harmful behaviors. Researchers have shown that working with individuals who are already involved in harmful behaviors is challenging but can produce positive outcomes. Although current research does not provide all the answers, it can guide our work so that strategies can be more effective. Additionally, we must learn from the best practices of others while individualizing strategies for our own communities and for each individual.

We believe that intervention work must have the following four guiding principles to be successful: 1) involvement of organizations that care about young people and believe they can change; 2) targeted and based on data; 3) individualized, intentional and focused on outcomes; and 4) long term.

After reviewing the research and discussing intervention in depth, we believe that there are five core elements to intervention work. We believe that each of these core elements must be targeted and based on data, intentional and outcome focused, and long term. They also must be implemented by organizations that care about young people and believe they can change. The core elements are:

a. **Outreach and Youth Work:** Young people need positive, constructive, purposeful, long-term relationships with caring and mature adults to help them change.

b. **Programming:** Programming helps to develop necessary skills for the young person. Examples of programming include educational, employment, counseling, substance abuse treatment, parenting, and family support. The purpose of programming is to build competency that will drive the young person to reach his outcomes.

c. **Organizational Partnerships:** Partnerships among community, police and criminal/juvenile justice are vital. Organizations, agencies, and departments that work with young people must do so in a coordinated manner. In order to be most effective, they must share information and responsibility. An "us versus them"

mentality simply will not work. One organization/agency cannot provide all the necessary services to a young person. In order to have a coordinated and intentional response, partnerships are vital.

d. **Suppression:** The formal criminal justice/juvenile justice system must be part of the intervention strategy in order to maintain community safety.

e. **Family and Community Involvement:** When developing strategies, we must keep in mind the realities of the family and community structures within which young people live.   Programs that involve families can be more effective than individual-focused strategies alone. When possible and sensible, families should be involved. Additionally, reducing the risk factors in the community as a whole is a desirable outcome in any large-scale intervention work.

Researchers have shown that various types of programs can be promising or effective depending on how they are implemented and what targeted population is involved. All successful programs must keep in mind adolescent brain development and its implications. Additionally, programming must be structured to mitigate any negative consequences of grouping delinquent or antisocial young people together. Sometimes this will result in individual programming, and other times it will mean intentionally forming groups that do not reinforce negative or antisocial attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Research and experience have also demonstrated which strategies do not work and which may actually be causing harm. Potentially harmful approaches include those which: reinforce negative group identity and cohesiveness, take an "us versus them" approach, use relationships without goals or framework, neglect to incorporate accountability, and involve youth who are not yet engaged in negative behaviors (these young people should be in prevention programs). Among program staff, some factors that will prevent success in an intervention strategy include: fear of failure and lack of risk-taking, youth workers who cannot help youth advance to the next level, quick fixes, failure to follow a framework, failure to measure impact or focus on outcomes, and failure to develop strategies that meet individuals "where they are." Additionally, suppression strategies without proper human intervention or services are unlikely to significantly reduce dangerous behaviors.

Finally, there is the "heart" piece. There are strategies that work and strategies that do not. There is research, data collection, tracking outcomes, capacity building, fundraising, and so much more that comprises successful intervention strategies. One other piece that is vital, albeit difficult to measure, is the "heart" piece. For an intervention strategy to work, the adults who are part of the strategy must have faith that young people can change and that the intervention can work. They must care about young people, nurture them, and give of themselves to encourage change. They must never give up on young people by never completely shutting the proverbial door on them. This does not mean that adults should be naïve. On the contrary, youth need both structure and unconditional love, both praise and consequences. Even in those instances when young people are better served in the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems, the adults that work with them still must not give up.

Intervention work is very challenging. Along with the inherent difficulties in working with this population, funding is scarce for programs that aim to implement change. Additionally, there has not been sufficient research on which strategies actually work. Researchers have highlighted

certain programs that have or have not successfully reduced recidivism, welfare dependence, and other negative adult outcomes, but more research on young people is needed especially regarding the overall cost benefits. This document aims to bring together findings from both current research and leaders in the field from the Greater Boston area. We hope these findings will allow us to best utilize our limited resources in an effort to help young people who are already engaging in dangerous behaviors to change and become well-functioning adults living out of harm's way. We hope you find it helpful.

We believe the following:

- *If* we are intentional about what we do, learn from data and effective practices, and keep trying to do what works;

- *If* we are deliberate about how we use ourselves and how we work together (no matter how challenging it is);

- *If* we are mindful of the responsibility of this work;

- *If* we endlessly believe it is possible for young people, ourselves, and the community to change; and

- *If* we stay in the work,

THEN we can keep more young people alive, support them to live in a good way, be better adults (parents, youth workers, community partners, criminal justice professionals, police officers), and bring peace to our communities.

INTRODUCTION

You are out there working with the toughest young people in the neighborhood. You know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but you are way passed that. The young people you are working with are already using drugs, have guns, party all night with dangerous peers, exhibit violent behaviors, and take sexual risks. They are harming themselves and others. Many have mental health issues, pregnant girlfriends, and unstable families. Some are pregnant themselves. You have arrested some of them dozens of times (as well as their brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and other family members), but they still end up back on the street with the same problems as before. You do not think locking them up is the answer, but you do not want to enable them either. Others in your field say it is too hard to work with them. It is too expensive to really impact their lives at this point. It is just too late. They say that targeting programming toward them takes much needed resources away from other young people who still have a chance.

But even with all of their problems, you have so much hope for them. You can see their potential, what they are truly capable of. They have so much to offer deep inside of them. You just need to bring it out. If only they had…, if only they could…, if only you could…but what do they really need? What can help them make that leap from where they are to something better? How can you help them avoid the bleak future others say is inevitable? How can you find and build the partnerships necessary to get them what they need to change for the better? You have seen program after program fail them. Some programs have even seemed to make them worse. Secure confinement alone has not addressed the problem. Do no harm, you think, but what can you really do? What really works with this population?

The goal of this document is to provide a framework for intervention work with youth and young adults ages 14-24 who are currently involved in violence, delinquency, substance abuse, and other risky behaviors. It is written for youth workers (including street workers), police, criminal justice and juvenile justice professionals, policymakers, and anyone else who does this work. It is meant to help us all think about, review, and, if necessary, change the way we do intervention work so that we can improve. Although this work is difficult, it is important and, if done correctly, effective. The young people we serve deserve the very best from us, and we hope this document helps us in providing that.

To create this document, we brought together a small group of representatives from juvenile justice, law enforcement, and community-based youth-serving organizations in the Greater Boston area to discuss what we think works and does not work with this population. We also discussed some of the latest research. The discussions were lively, informative, and sometimes difficult. We did not always agree. We did, however, come to some consensus about many of the components and requirements that we think can make intervention work successful. In instances where we did not come to definitive conclusions, we present varying opinions and ask provocative questions in order to spark more thinking and discussion. We also recognize that there may be other successful strategies we have inadvertently omitted, and we welcome your feedback in order to inform future dialogue and learning.

First, this document aims to define *intervention* so that there is a common understanding of this important stage in the continuum. Second, it brings together best practices so that we can improve the quality of intervention work with very high-risk youth and young adults. Although we focused primarily on community-based responses, many of the ideas presented are relevant to a variety of settings. Throughout the document, research on both juvenile justice and adult corrections is incorporated since the targeted age group spans both of these systems. These best practices include specific strategies for working directly with youth and young adults, improving organizational capacity, and collaborating across agencies and communities. Third, this document addresses some of the strategies that have shown to be unsuccessful.

This report was originally going to include a section on the challenges facing the success of intervention strategies, but we realized that intervention strategies are inherently challenging in all aspects including start up, implementation, and sustainment. Thus, these challenges are addressed throughout the document.

There are too few resources to waste on ineffective strategies. **Too often we ask ourselves, "What can I do and how much will it cost?" instead of asking ourselves, "What works, and how can I do that?"** We hope the ideas presented will serve to generate new ideas about how to best serve these young people. We hope that at the very least, it will get people thinking.

PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION AND KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Serious violence is part of a lifestyle that includes drugs, guns, precocious sex, and other risky behaviors. Youths involved in serious violence often commit many other types of crimes and exhibit other problem behaviors, presenting a serious challenge to intervention efforts. Successful interventions must confront not only the violent behavior of these young people, but also their lifestyles, which are teeming with risk.
- Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, Conclusion

Defining Intervention

Let us begin with what intervention is not. Intervention is not prevention, and it is not suppression alone. Similar to prevention strategies, intervention strategies are concerned with reducing substance abuse, violence, and other harmful behaviors. However, unlike prevention – which aims to prevent negative behaviors – intervention strategies target individuals who are already engaging in very risky and/or dangerous behaviors, whether or not they are involved in the traditional criminal or juvenile justice systems. Unlike suppression-only activities, intervention strategies aim to work intentionally to change the behaviors of young people through a balance of support and accountability. Whereas suppression can be part of an intervention strategy, and some components of prevention programs can be successfully utilized in intervention work, intervention is an exclusive stage on the criminal justice/juvenile justice continuum.

We can think of intervention as "interruption with a purpose," an opportunity to create a changed path. Intervention targets young people who are in the middle of high-risk situations and will almost certainly experience more negative outcomes without effective intervention. In the midst of these situations, there is opportunity to intervene and shift the negative trajectory. In order to be successful, intervention work must be targeted and based on data, intentional and outcome focused, and long term. Strategies should include outreach and youth work, programming, organizational partnerships, suppression, and family/community involvement. This important work must involve individuals, organizations, agencies, and departments who care about young people and believe they can change.

Importance of Research

Despite early skepticism regarding intervention programs, recent literature reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that intervention programs can be effective in reducing delinquency.
- OJJDP 2003, The Research

Many of us believe that it is important to work with this population simply because their lives are important and because they deserve our support to change. However, we must be able to demonstrate that the resources and efforts dedicated to intervention are worthwhile; research is a vital part of this process.

Much research has been done on the behaviors that correlate with crime, delinquency, and other adverse outcomes; on adolescent brain development and its implications; and on the

effectiveness of targeted programming and strategies. Although there is still much research that needs to be done on effective interventions for young people (especially certain subgroups) already engaged in risky behaviors, existing information can be very helpful in developing our strategies. This information – gathered both from research articles as well as criminal justice and juvenile justice publications that summarize current research – is very briefly described here.

Research on Juveniles

There is a strong relationship between adverse outcomes in late adolescence (e.g. juvenile convictions, being expelled from school, belonging to a gang, dropping out of school) and serious negative outcomes in early adulthood such as poverty and violence (Walker, Guzzo & Whiting, 2007). Because of this, targeting programming for older adolescents seems to make sense in terms of preventing negative adult outcomes.

In 2000, the OJJDP published a 200-study meta-analysis that addressed whether or not intervention programs can reduce recidivism rates among serious delinquents and what types of programs are most effective (Lipsey, Wilson, & Cothern, 2000).[1] This meta-analysis of both institutionalized and non-institutionalized offenders found that there was an overall decrease of 12% in recidivism for serious juvenile offenders who received treatment interventions. These results were positive, statistically significant, and large enough to be meaningful. Furthermore, the analysis found that the effects measured across studies varied considerably. Nonresidential interventions that focused on individual counseling, interpersonal skills training, and behavioral programs showed the strongest, most consistent impact on recidivism for serious juvenile offenders. Additionally, for institutionalized offenders, approaches that focused on interpersonal skills training and community-based, family-type group homes were most effective (2000).

Effects from Interventions with Non-Institutionalized Juvenile Offenders

Positive Effects, Consistent Evidence	Positive Effects, Less Consistent Evidence	Mixed but Generally Positive Effects, Inconsistent Evidence
• Individual counseling • Interpersonal skills • Behavior programs	• Multiple services • Restitution, probation/parole	• Employment related programs • Academic programs • Advocacy/casework • Family counseling • Group counseling

Source: Lipsey, Wilson, & Cothern, 2000.

To help practitioners implement effective strategies, the OJJDP developed the Model Programs Guide, which categorized effective programs into five stages: 1) prevention, 2) immediate sanctions, 3) intermediate sanctions/interventions, 4) residential, and 5) reentry. Program components from the intermediate sanctions/interventions, residential, and reentry stages that

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[1] Sample populations were largely male, mostly white or of mixed ethnicity, with an average age of 14 to 17 years. Most of the juveniles had prior offenses. In two-thirds of the samples, some or all of the juveniles had a history of aggressive behaviors.

have been shown to be effective should be incorporated into intervention strategies. The OJJDP Model Programs Guide includes effective ways of implementing the following types of programs, strategies, and models: aftercare, afterschool/recreation, cognitive behavioral treatment, day treatment, drug/alcohol therapy/education, family therapy, group homes, home confinement/electronic monitoring, probation services, residential treatment centers, restorative justice, specialized courts (drug court, gun court, reentry court), secure juvenile correctional facilities, vocational/job training, wilderness camps, and wraparound/case management.[2] For example, the guide explains that the most effective secure corrections programs serve only a small number of participants and provide individualized services such as interpersonal skills intervention whereas large, congregate-care facilities such as training schools and boot camps have not proven effective at reducing recidivism. Successful alternatives to incarceration have also been studied and can be replicated.

Though certain intervention strategies have been shown to be effective, programming targeting our most at-risk young people ages 14-24 tends to be significantly more expensive than broadly cast programming for early adolescence, and the cost-effectiveness of these programs is not completely clear. We must be cognizant of this fact when determining our target populations. A 2007 study by Walker, Guzzo and Whiting used cost-benefit simulations to show that, while achieving desired outcomes with older adolescents is expensive and the potential reduction in negative behaviors in adults is small, there are certain high-risk categories that we can target for better outcomes:

> If funders and policy makers want to reduce societal harm, then the analyses suggest that they should target juveniles with convictions and those expelled from school. Two other categories might offer cost-effective targets: those who have been kicked out of their parents' homes (to try to prevent later adult conviction and welfare use); and those who have had children while younger than 18 (again, to try to prevent welfare use) (Walker, Guzzo & Whiting, 2007, p. 28).

Research on Adults

Over the years, a great deal of research has been conducted on offenders, correctional sanctions, and correctional programs; hundreds of studies have attempted to better identify the risk factors correlated with criminal conduct and the effectiveness of correctional intervention in reducing recidivism (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2006; Latessa & Lowekamp, n.d.). Research by Andrews, Bonta, Gendreau and others has identified the major risk factors associated with criminal conduct. These risk factors are also called *criminogenic needs*, crime producing factors that are strongly correlated with risk. Because of this research, we can now identify criminogenic risk factors and categorize them into those we can change (dynamic risk factors) and those we cannot change (static risk factors). Researchers have also identified the characteristics that are unrelated to future criminal behavior (non-criminogenic characteristics) (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004; Latessa & Lowekamp, n.d.).

Properly addressing dynamic risk factors can reduce criminal behaviors. Examples of dynamic risk factors are: antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs; pro-criminal peers and isolation from

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[2] Detailed description of selected programs can be found in Appendix 1 at end of document.

prosocial peers; dysfunctional family relationships; weak social and problem-solving skills; current substance abuse issues; harmful temperament and behavioral characteristics (e.g., egocentrism, impulsivity, aggression); and educational and vocational deficiencies.[3]

Static risk factors include: a history of antisocial behavior; the number and severity of prior convictions; history of childhood abuse and neglect; history of substance abuse; and history of education, employment, family, and social failures.[4] Although these risk factors are static and cannot be undone by intervention work, we may be able to help young people learn how they handle them (for example, we cannot undo past trauma but we can help young people address it). Additionally, we should make sure, through our partnerships, that prevention programs are focused on these areas and that individuals with these risk factors are considered for certain prevention and intervention programs.

Factors that are not associated with criminal behavior include anxiety, low self-esteem, creative abilities, medical needs, and physical conditioning. Programs focusing primarily on these non-criminogenic areas (instead of focusing on criminogenic needs) will be ineffective in reducing recidivism.[5]

Based on the findings from a multitude of research studies done by various authors, the Crime and Justice Institute (2004) has identified eight evidence-based principles for effective interventions with adult offenders:

1. **Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs** - Assessing offenders' risks and needs (focusing on dynamic and static risk factors and criminogenic needs) at the individual and aggregate levels is essential for implementing the principles of best practice.

2. **Enhance Intrinsic Motivation** - Research strongly suggests that motivational interviewing techniques, rather than persuasion tactics, effectively enhance motivation for initiating and maintaining behavior changes.

3. **Target Interventions** -
   a. Risk Principle - Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
   b. Need Principle - Target interventions to criminogenic needs.
   c. Responsivity Principle - Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, gender, and culture when assigning to programs.
   d. Dosage - Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months.
   e. Treatment Principle - Integrate treatment into full sentence/sanctions requirements.

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[3] This information comes from documents published by the Crime and Justice Institute (2004, 2004) and by Latessa and Lowenkamp (2006, n.d.) that summarized findings from a variety of researchers including Bonta, Andrews and Gendreau.

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[5] This information comes from documents published by the Crime and Justice Institute (2004, 2004) and by Latessa and Lowenkamp (2006, n.d.) that summarized findings from a variety of researchers including Bonta, Andrews and Gendreau.

4. **Skill Train with Directed Practice** - Provide evidence-based programming that emphasizes cognitive-behavioral strategies and is delivered by well-trained staff.

5. **Increase Positive Reinforcement** - Apply four positive reinforcements for every one negative reinforcement for optimal behavior change results.

6. **Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities** - Realign and actively engage pro-social support for offenders in their communities for positive reinforcement of desired new behaviors.

7. **Measure Relevant Processes/Practices** - An accurate and detailed documentation of case information and staff performance, along with a formal and valid mechanism for measuring outcomes, is the foundation of evidence-based practice.

8. **Provide Measurement Feedback** - Providing feedback builds accountability and maintains integrity, ultimately improving outcomes.

Conclusion

Targeting intervention strategies toward older adolescents and young adults who are currently living in harm's way is worthwhile and effective at implementing change. However, the programs must be high quality. They must utilize effective strategies and target appropriate participants.

Adolescent Brain Development Research

The MacArthur Foundation and other researchers have recently completed groundbreaking work on adolescent brain development. These findings should inform everyone working with young people. Science can now demonstrate that during adolescence—which typically ranges from ages 10-25—"several areas of the brain go through their final developmental stages and develop greater complexity, which in turn affects thinking, behavior and potential for learning and rehabilitation" (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2006, p. 5). As a result, two major factors should inform us in how we work with this age group. First, we need to be aware that the brain is not completely developed during this time and that young people are not fully mature in their judgment, decision-making, and problem-solving capacities. Second, many factors can disrupt normal brain development such as neurological trauma, substance use, family and social disruptions, court-involvement and delinquency, and emotional and physical trauma. These factors may inhibit or delay certain features of brain development and maturation.

Below are three of the main parts of the brain that are developing during adolescence, as summarized by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2006) for practitioners working with young people:

1. Dopamine: Dopamine is a chemical in the brain that affects concentration, memory, problem-solving, and mental associations that connect actions and pleasure. During adolescence the levels of dopamine production shift. Activities that were once thrilling no longer cause the same excitement. This can lead to increasingly riskier behavior in an effort to experience heightened levels of thrill or excitement.

2. Limbic System: The limbic system is associated with the processing and managing of emotion and motivation. When fully operating, the limbic system is a gauge that keeps people from losing control of their behavior. Since the limbic system is still not fully developed during adolescence, young people are more prone than adults to mood swings, impulsive behavior, overreaction, and under-reaction.

3. Prefrontal Cortex: The prefrontal cortex governs a person's executive functions of reasoning, impulse control, and advanced thought. This is the very last area of the human brain to mature.

As a result of this important information, we must adapt our programming and strategies accordingly. Given young people's developing judgment, problem-solving and decision-making skills, what kind of strategies would work best with them? How might a young person with a history of trauma and family disruptions respond to the program we have developed? How can our intervention strategies help support young people during their mood swings and impulsive behaviors? How do we keep our space safe when young people are acting out? How do we think about accountability and programming?

FOUNDATION OF INTERVENTION WORK

Intervention work is difficult and requires intense dedication and commitment over time. Individuals and groups interested in this work must be dedicated to certain foundational elements or their efforts will fail. We believe that intervention work must have the following four guiding principles to be successful: 1) involvement of organizations that care about young people and believe they can change; 2) targeted and based on data; 3) individualized, intentional and focused on outcomes; and 4) long term. Each of these guiding principles is necessary for the intervention work to succeed in changing the negative trajectory of so many of the young people living in harm's way. It is not enough to care without being intentional. It is not enough to be targeted and not be dedicated for the long term. Each of these four foundational elements is necessary for success.

Involvement of Organizations that Care about Young People and Believe They Can Change

Organizations interested in doing intervention work must care about young people and believe that they can change. For intervention to be effective, this core belief must be shared. If this core belief is not already a part of an organization's mission, it can be nurtured among a certain subset of staff. For example, within certain police cultures and law enforcement communities, it may still be tough to talk about intervention work. This should not exclude police from doing intervention work. Police are a vital part of any intervention strategy, but not all police officers need to buy in. Instead of trying to get buy in from all officers, police departments can focus on their gang units, for example, since they have the most interaction with our highest-risk youth and young adults. Another possibility within a police department is to identify officers most interested in this type of work at the recruit level. Whoever is involved, we must be clear on expectations, understand what intervention work means for the particular department, and recognize the balance between being tough and being empathetic. Additionally, no one should be forced to do intervention work. It is ineffective to require people to do so if they are not already inclined and/or willing to get involved.

Caring about young people also means taking the time to understand them both individually and generally. Individually, organizations should understand the risk and protective factors that are specific to their communities and how they affect young people. They should also be culturally competent and knowledgeable about gender differences. More generally, organizations must have a solid understanding of positive youth development (including adolescent brain development) and the potential hindrances to it. More specifically, *organizations must be knowledgeable about the effects of violence, abuse, and other trauma on the development of young people and how that trauma may be manifested.* Finally, organizations must also be able to recognize serious mental, emotional, and physical health issues in order to refer young people to the proper services. We certainly do not all have to be experts in human behavior and development, but, at the minimum, we should all have a basic understanding of these issues.

Targeted and Based on Data

Many of these young people are drop-outs or truants, substance abusers, gang members, have extensive criminal records, are young parents themselves and/or come from broken homes without the income to support basic living requirements. More often than not, these youth are the ones who fall between the cracks of the very systems that were designed to help and protect them. Few programs attempt to serve them and even fewer have demonstrated success in altering their life outcomes.
- Roca, 2008, p. 24

Before any action is taken, we must be clear about what we are trying to do and how we will know if we are successful. This pertains to both community-level and individual-level intervention work. Arrest statistics, crime trends, self-report surveys, school dropout and expulsion data, and community needs assessments all help to determine geographic locations where intervention may be needed in a community. Individual needs assessments and referrals from other agencies can determine which individuals would benefit from intervention strategies.

Choose the Right Area of Focus: Should we target individuals, groups, or specific geographic areas? A case can be made for each of these targets. Targeting geographic areas seems to make sense since risk factors vary greatly from community to community and neighborhood to neighborhood. Although young people living in any city, town, or neighborhood may be in need

of intervention services, communities and neighborhoods display varying degrees of risk. Given limited resources, how do we target our resources to make intervention work most effective? Should we dedicate resources outside of the most risky neighborhoods if they successfully target high-risk groups or individuals? Whichever focus area is chosen, we must act intentionally and based on data and information to determine the need. What is the need for our work? How do we know? How will we know if we are addressing these needs? How can we develop appropriate outcomes for our target population?

Choose Appropriate Participants and Time to Intervene: Only individuals who are currently engaged in harmful behaviors should be targeted for intervention strategies. "At-risk youth" is a broad category encompassing young people along a vast continuum of preparedness for education, career, and safety. Most at-risk youth are not appropriate targets for intervention strategies. Intervention strategies will not be effective with lower-risk young people and may even make them more delinquent. A helpful concept used to describe this is *dosage*. The right amount of intervention delivered at the right time for the right duration for the right youth is important. If this dosage is incorrect, we can do harm: too little can be ineffective and too much can bring lower-risk offenders into unnecessarily heavy intervention, causing harm in various ways. Young people who are already in crisis

> *Intervention Beginning with DYS Involvement: The Education Initiative*
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> One example of a successful intervention initiative that is targeted and based on data is the Department of Youth Services' Educational Initiative. Through a collaborative, five-year improvement process in their educational services, DYS was able to improve access, equity, and opportunity for their youth by creating an educational system that supports high quality student achievement in all DYS facilities. This program included many components including a system-wide approach to support high quality education; effective curriculum, instruction, and professional development; alignment and integration to special education services; teacher recruitment and retention; education transition services; job readiness, vocational and employability transition services; and accountability, evaluation, and outcomes. Perhaps the most important component of the program was the change in perceptions of the teachers, staff and students. There was a measurable change from a belief that the youth could not learn to a belief that the youth could learn. This powerful change in beliefs coupled with improved resources has led to some incredible outcomes. Before the initiative was fully implemented, approximately 65% of the students passed the English Language Arts MCAS compared to 90% after the initiative was implemented. Similar improvements occurred in the Math MCAS where the percent of DYS students passing increased from 41% to 70%. And in 2008, 36 students participated in courses at community colleges. Because DYS cared about young people and believed they could change, they were able to improve educational outcomes for their youth and track those improvements. They were able to use data to determine needs, develop appropriate responses, and track progress.
> - DYS, 2009

or engaging in harmful behaviors are the right target for intervention strategies. These young people may or may not already be involved in the juvenile justice or adult justice systems. Thus, organizations that do intervention work must develop relationships with the formal justice system in order to get youth referred and also create a process of involving youth before contact with the justice system is made. Since most young people involved in violent behaviors will never be arrested for a violent crime (Office of the Surgeon General, 2007), this non-justice component of recruitment is very important. Non-justice related referrals can be made by schools, social services, faith-based institutions, and youth centers. Justice-related referrals can come from police, jails and houses of correction, probation, and DYS. In addition to referrals, we must think about utilizing outreach and population-based interventions. Intervention work is most appropriate for young people ages 14-24.

When to Start: Intervention with an individual can begin within or outside of the traditional system. Outside of the system, intervention can begin on the street or with a referral. Intervention can also begin with an arrest, DYS involvement, or sentencing to a jail or house of correction. These traditional system contacts can also be part of effective intervention strategies if used purposefully. In fact, while in a confined setting, intervention strategies can be even more effective since there is a captive audience. Intervention can also begin with street outreach or other non-system opportunities. Most importantly, it is never too late to intervene, no matter how harmful the young person's behaviors currently are.

Take Time to Measure Success, Evaluate What is and is not Working, and Make Changes When Necessary: Learning must never stop in our work with individuals, our organizations, and our collaborations. We must take time to examine successes and failures and learn from them. We must analyze programmatic data to see what is working and what is not. We must also look at macro-level crime data to see how the overall community is changing. *Receiving funding year after year does not prove that what we are doing is effective. We must continue learning and improving.* The young people deserve this diligence on our parts.

Intentional, Individualized and Outcome Focused

To be effective, youth workers cannot roam the streets without purpose or hang out with young people day after day without goals. To be effective, police cannot arrest young people only to have them back on the street days later involved in the same dangerous behaviors. To be effective, young people cannot leave jails, houses of correction, and other secure facilities without the proper supports and supervision. To be effective, coalitions cannot continue to meet without objectives that move them toward agreed-upon outcomes. To be effective, organizations cannot continue to function year after year without measuring their impact. We must build purposeful relationships and utilize strategies that are intentional, individualized and outcome focused.

Intentional: At every level – individual, organizational, and community – every part of every strategy must be developed and implemented intentionally. This means that there must be a purpose to each encounter with a young person, each program referral, each coalition meeting, and each program implemented. This means we must think through the strategies we are using to ensure that we are targeting the risk factors that researchers have shown to increase dangerous behaviors. We must continually ask ourselves if our actions make sense given our desired outcomes. Why are we implementing this particular program and what are the results we hope to see? Why are we out on the street at 11 pm? At 7 am? At 3 pm? Is our particular kind of outreach helping us accomplish our goals? What is our desired outcome when we lock up young person after young person? What are the desired outcomes for each of our actions? We need to know the reasons why we do the things we do, and we must know that the things we do will work if we do them correctly.

Individualized Strategy for Young People: Young people who are involved with the juvenile justice system require individualized approaches that take their needs and their strengths into account (Mental Health America, 1999). Each individual is different, and just because certain strategies work for one young person does not mean they will work for another. An individualized plan of change must be developed for each young person. This does not mean we have to develop something completely new for each individual. Similar strategies may work for individuals in similar situations. The concept is *structured discretion*, a need to develop and deliver on an individualized plan informed by and shaped by a decision-making structure based on what works. If not, this will result in unfocused, poor planning. When developing the plan, there must be a balance between structure and creativity. Regardless of the young person's

> *Medical model analogy*
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> Think of an individualized approach to youth work in the same way as a primary care provider (PCP) may approach a patient. A PCP may run a series of different tests based on symptoms. For example, if a patient has a stomachache, there are a range of things that could be causing it. The PCP should already know the series of tests used to rule out certain causes and the available treatments for each. While each individual has unique DNA, everyone's system works in similar ways. An effective PCP would prescribe the least invasive and disruptive treatment that she thinks would work. Then, she would check back to see if the treatment was working. If not, the PCP would try a different approach. Youth work should be like this: focused, deliberate, targeted, and measured. The desired outcomes are relatively standard from individual to individual, but the strategies used to get to the outcomes will vary. Because youth work is less science-based than medicine, tracking outcomes is even more important to make sure the "treatment" is working.

situation, all individualized plans should be comprised of multiple strategies over multiple years. Also, plans should be developed together with the young person and if applicable, the family. The young person and his family need a voice – not a just a chance to speak, but a chance to be heard and considered. Depending on the environment (youth center, probation, employment program, locked residential facility, etc.) the level of voice in the plan may vary, but the young person must have a voice in at least part of the plan. Buy in by the young person is a critical factor. Young people are much more apt to follow a plan that they helped design themselves. It may not be overt buy in, but change will not happen with young people if they do not agree, even at some grudging level, to engage. Additionally, plans should take into account issues of culture and gender and always be appropriate developmentally based on adolescent brain development.

Individual Strategy for Community: The importance of individual strategies pertains to intervention work at the community level as well. Strategies that work in one community may not necessarily work in another. There must be an understanding of the unique problems and challenges of the individuals, gangs, community, etc.

Outcome Focused: Having clearly defined outcomes makes the work better. Just as intervention strategies are initiated based on what the data tell us, clear outcomes must be developed to ensure that all work drives toward intended outcomes. Once the work has begun, outcomes must be measured and reevaluated to ensure that they make sense. It may seem overwhelming to quantify and track this work; however, the work must be outcome-focused to ensure that progress is being made. *If we are not measuring impact, we should not be doing this work. There has to be some positive change because of the work we do, and we have to make sure we can measure it.* We want for these young people the same things we want for our own children. We must ask ourselves, "What are the key outcomes I am looking for and what are the indicators?" Just because a strategy sounds promising, it does not mean that it will necessarily yield the intended results. We have to know whether we are causing positive change, whether

we are not causing any change, or whether we are actually causing harm. *We must continually ask ourselves the difficult questions.* We should not be guessing at what we do on a day-to-day basis. By having clearly defined outcomes, goals, and objectives, we ensure that the level of work being delivered is appropriate and effective at the individual, organizational, and community levels. Small steps toward change can and must be measured with this challenging population. We may have to redefine success before creating measurable small steps. (See Appendices 2 and 3 to see examples of outcome measures that can be used for intervention work.)

Long Term to Work Through the Stages of Change

Change takes time. For individuals who have been engaging in risky behaviors and living in an environment where antisocial behavior is the norm, choosing a safe and healthy lifestyle may take years. To guide intervention and to track progress, we should utilize a framework that helps us to recognize and track progress as change happens. One example is the Stages of Change framework, a transtheoretical model that reflects the thought processes that many individuals engage in when making a behavioral change. It recognizes that behavioral change is not one event, but rather a series of decisions and actions over time. The stages of change in this transtheoretical model are: 1) pre-contemplation, 2) contemplation, 3) preparation, 4) action, 5) maintenance, and 6) termination (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). Relapse is built into the model and is a time where learning should take place.

Concept/Stage	Definition	Youth Worker's Role (or other adult working with young people)	Example: Decreasing Street/Gang Involvement
Pre-Contemplation	Young person is not thinking about or has explicitly rejected change.	Increase awareness of need for change, personalize information on risks and benefits.	Participant actively engaged in street/gang behavior and unwilling to see it as harmful.
Contemplation	Young person is thinking about change, and perhaps seeks out some program, may respond to some positive suggestions from staff.	Motivate, encourage to make specific plans.	Participant beginning to think about the potential harm of street/gang involvement.
Preparation (Planning, decision, determination)	Young person and staff talk about what it would take to make change happen and what the young person wants in the future.	Assist in developing concrete action.	Participant discussing difficulties of street/gang involvement with youth worker and ways to shift behaviors/activities.
Action	Implementation of specific action plans. The young person begins to take positive steps toward improving his or her life through practice (trial and error) in the context of a plan that staff and the young person have discussed in detail.	Assist with feedback, problem-solving, social support, reinforcement.	Participant actively attempting to engage in more positive activities (education, employment, life skills, etc.).

Concept/Stage	Definition	Youth Worker's Role (or other adult working with young people)	Example: Decreasing Street/Gang Involvement
Maintenance	Through ongoing staff support during difficult times and new cooperative efforts, the young person is achieving concrete improvement in his or her life, moving demonstrably toward achieving self-sustaining lifestyle and living out of harm's way. This does not mean everything is perfect. "If you get to 51% you've made change."	Assist in coping, reminders, finding alternatives, avoiding slips/relapses (as applies).	Participant maintaining engagement in positive activities and making progress on other goals.

Source: Roca, 2008. Five Year Business Plan FY 2009-2013. p. 30.

Traditionally, most programs are designed to be part of the action stage only. We must be able to work with young people throughout all of the stages of change in order to be successful. For example, a common mistake is to identify a very high-risk young person and immediately place him in a community-based program. This usually does not work because the young person is not yet ready to be in a highly-structured program dependent on attendance. We must be able to work with young people as they move through the pre-contemplation stage, the contemplation stage, and the planning, decision, and determination stages. We must be able to meet young people "where they are."

We also must be prepared to work through the relapse stage, which almost all young people will experience. Adolescent development science tells us that young people learn by trial and error. As a result, we need to let them try and fail in a controlled way to keep them safe. Intervention strategies must be designed for all stages, not just the action stage, and be designed with relapse in mind.

Since intervention work with individuals must be long term, this necessitates that the organizations working with these individuals and the coalitions dedicated to intervention work must also be dedicated to working over a long period of time. We must have the capacity and the willingness to persevere.

CORE ELEMENTS OF INTERVENTION WORK

We believe that there are five core elements to intervention work, and that each of the core elements must be targeted and based on data, intentional and outcome focused, and long term. They also must involve organizations that care about young people and believe they can change. The core elements are:

1. Outreach and Youth Work – Developing positive, constructive, long-term relationships with a purpose
2. Programming
3. Organizational Partnerships
4. Suppression
5. Family and Community Involvement

Outreach and Youth Work – Developing positive, constructive, long-term relationships with a purpose

This work requires an understanding that we must give of ourselves, with all of the energy we have, in all that we do, because it is the right thing to do for our young people – not for any other reason. If we choose to do this work, we must understand that we are also choosing to use ourselves as vehicles for a young person's transformation.
- Roca, 2007, p. 2.3

When done right, outreach and youth work are systemic attempts to change behaviors through relationships. The core of any successful intervention strategy is the development of intentional relationships with goals to help young people move through the stages of change in order to achieve more positive outcomes. The relationships must be positive, constructive, purposeful, and long term. We do not want anything less than what we would want for our own children. Building trust is vital in helping young people change and in making the relationship work, but trust is only the beginning. The relationship must be used to help young people make positive changes in their lives.

This relationship is not a friendship, but rather a relationship with a purpose that is built on trust, caring, and respect. These relationships can have many titles, including intensive case management or transformational relationships. The name is not important, but rather how the relationships are used. Successfully using these relationships means staying in them for a long period of time, even when the young person makes mistakes. It means using the relationships to help young people make positive changes. If done right, more young people will get there than not.

Youth workers are the primary adults expected to build these positive, constructive, purposeful, and long-term relationships, but adults working with young people in law enforcement, juvenile justice, probation, and social services can also build effective relationships.

As adults committed to promoting change in the lives of young people, we must understand our responsibility to show up in a good way physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We must engage in self-reflection and seek appropriate support so that we can be fully present for our young people. We must always communicate honestly, openly, and clearly with young people and community partners, even when it is difficult.

The following competencies/characteristics are necessary in order to effectively utilize relationships for positive and sustainable change:

Care about Young People: To be in positive, constructive, purposeful, and long-term relationships with young people, we, as caring adults, must believe that young people can change and that intervention works. It takes time to build relationships with young people who are engaged in high-risk behaviors. Often, it takes years. We must be dedicated in our vigilance to continue making contact and give young people opportunities to change. We cannot give up. When young people suffer relapses – and almost all of them will – we must be there to support them. We have the privilege of being the "other adult" in the lives of young people who need support and structure to live safely. We are charged with the responsibility of drawing out hopefulness and helping young people care about changing for the better. We must use ourselves to help others grow. It is an amazing responsibility and privilege. Caring about young people is necessary for this work to even begin.

Relentless Outreach: We cannot simply wait for young people to show up. We must go to the places where young people spend their time and find them. We must go to the street, to their homes, find their friends, call their phones, leave messages, wait after school, and ask questions (Roca, 2007, p. 3.2). This needs to be done not only to initiate the relationship, but also throughout the relationship in order to engage the young people and to keep them engaged. When young people are experiencing difficult situations in their lives, they are not just going to show up and ask for help. By pursuing young people relentlessly, we help them to understand that they are worth showing up for. Additionally, it keeps us connected to what is happening in the community and on the street. In order to successfully use outreach as part of intervention work, we should be able to do the following: 1) perform outreach, street work and follow up, 2) identify potential and critical community and street issues affecting young people, and 3) strategically intervene in a crisis.

Be Consistent and Tell the Truth: We must be consistent in our message that change can happen and that harmful behaviors are not acceptable. We also must be clear that the purpose of the relationship is change or transformation. Young people must hear this message over and over again. We must keep saying, "It can be different," and be ready for young people when they make the decision to change. During the pre-contemplation stage (see Stages of Change on page 21), we must show up relentlessly and keep engaging young people in dialogue. Once the young person has engaged, we must make contact at least two or three times per week. We must show up when we say we will show up. The young person needs to know that we are there. We need to keep young people engaged and keep reaching out to them until they decide they are ready to change.

Build Trust: Before much of this work can be done, we must develop a trusting relationship. *For many young people who are dealing with the effects of abuse, violence, abandonment and/or other trauma in their lives, learning to trust is a huge step.* The ability to trust is necessary for

building the relationships that can help them move toward positive outcomes, but it is also an end in and of itself. An inability to trust hinders a young person's growth. The trust-building process can be restorative if nurtured. Once trust is built with young people, we should help them to build trusting relationships with other supportive adults.

Work Hard: Although working with this population can be rewarding, it is quite difficult. We must have the desire and ability to come to work every day and work at a high level. Working with young people engaged in risky behaviors and addressing the "hard stuff" is taxing. We must be people who want to get out and do something. We must be dedicated to helping young people and must really want to take on the effort. For the most part, specific skills can be learned if the individual has the sincere desire to be in this field.

Be a Positive Role Model: Adults working with young people must "display and act with hope and positive energy at all times and demonstrate personal leadership and initiative through actions, behaviors, accountability and willingness to strive towards excellence" (Roca, 2007, p. 2.1). For many young people, the adults in their lives have let them down. These young people do not have positive role models or good examples of what they can become in their futures. As the "other adult" in the lives of these very high-risk young people, we have the privilege of modeling a healthy and mature way of being.

Set Appropriate Boundaries: As the "other adult" in the lives of these young people, we must act as mature and responsible adults at all times. We must never drink, consume drugs, or engage in other risky behaviors with young people for any reason. We are not merely friends or buddies. We have a structured and purposeful role to play in helping young people work toward positive outcomes. Boundaries are vital in making sure this happens. These boundaries must be clearly set so that both the young person and the adult understand the purpose of the relationship. Additionally, we must understand that we cannot be accountable for what the young person does; we can only be accountable for what we do.

Support Young People as They Access Programs and Services: Once young people have made the decision to change, they should be surrounded by services. Our role at this point is to keep supporting them as they access these services, especially when they relapse. Most young people will not succeed immediately, and we must be able to support them and help them to keep moving forward toward positive change.

Utilize a Framework to Guide Work: Intervention work can seem abstract, but the work must be intentional in order for it to be effective. How can we develop and utilize a clear theory of change to guide what we are trying to do? How do we envision change happening? There are clear frameworks, such as the Stages of Change, which can be utilized to design and incorporate measurable goals and objectives in order to track progress and ensure that every interaction we have encourages change. We must be able to work within a framework to track young people's progress. Without a framework, it is highly likely that the work will become too unstructured and not intentional enough. *It is not enough to merely hang out with young people and gain their trust. We must also have the capacity to support young people through the stages of change; a framework helps to make this happen.* A framework can help us assess where young people are in their readiness and how to form appropriate goals and expectations. Although we never want to sell young people short, we do not want to set unreasonably high expectations for them either.

Be an Advocate: Bureaucratic systems can be difficult for anyone to manage. Our very at-risk young people also struggle to advocate for themselves within the various systems they encounter. As trusted adults, we can advocate for young people while helping them advocate for themselves when they have court appearances, are applying for public housing or other support services, have trouble in school, or when they find themselves in other common stressful situations. This is especially important when young people do not have a parent or other close family member to help them.

Set Limits, Hold Young People Accountable, and Be Prepared for Relapse: Just like effective parents, adults who successfully work with young people need to set limits, hold young people accountable, and support them when they make mistakes. *It is vital for young people's development that they are held accountable for their actions so that eventually they will understand the importance of accountability in their lives.* Consequences are a part of learning and maturation. In order to assist young people in this learning, we may have to redefine what makes them accountable. If young people come up with the measures themselves, they will mean more to them. And when relapse occurs, it is important that we support young people as they experience and process the consequences of their negative actions so that "every failure is theirs to learn from" (Roca, 2007, p. 2.3). As young people go through the stages of change, they will almost always relapse. This is a good time for learning, reflection, and refocusing. We may also be able to prevent failure by noticing signs of distress and by being re-directive with young people. Finally, most young people respond better to rewards than to sanctions. If we consistently catch young people "doing something right," they may be more accepting of consequences when they are caught doing something wrong and more able to change in the long term. For optimal behavioral change results, researchers have shown that we should apply four positive reinforcements for every one negative reinforcement (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). Most importantly, *when setbacks do happen, we must be sure to address the behavior and not criticize the personal value of the individual.*

Know When to Involve the Traditional System: Although we must believe in young people and never shut the door on them, there are times when they are best served by the traditional juvenile justice or criminal justice systems. Sometimes young people must be taken off the street for their own and/or the community's safety. This can be part of an intervention strategy if utilized correctly. In order to grow and become responsible adults, young people must understand the value and importance of laws and rules in a society. We can support them during these setbacks and help them learn from them. *We must not promise what we cannot deliver, and we must never join in an illicit alliance with young people or with the system to help young people evade the system.* If this is done, we lose credibility and trust, and the respect is gone. Young people have a keen sense of fairness and will lose respect for us if we aid them in unfairly or illegally avoiding the system. If young people do become involved in the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems, we must sustain the relationship during this time and provide support as they learn from the experience.

Do Not Take Failure Personally: Change is difficult, so when young people get angry with us, act unappreciative of our efforts, show disrespect toward the space or staff, or relapse in the change process, we have to remember that it is not about us. We cannot take away from or control the process young people must go through to make change possible for themselves. We must continue to show up for them, even when their process includes negative thoughts, actions, and behaviors that might impact us personally. We cannot take their failure personally. This

will be challenging and sometimes feel bad, especially given the amount of positive energy we must offer. No one does this work alone; we must know when to ask for support from coworkers or supervisors when needed.

Programs and Programming

In order to help young people choose a life without violence, someone needs to spend time with them over long periods of time, help them engage into something positive and valuable, provide an environment where young people can succeed and fail and then succeed again, and give them the skills they need to participate successfully in life.
- Roca, 2007

The goal of programming is to help young people gain new skills and practice new behaviors that will lead to positive intended outcomes. Effective programming is about competence building that utilizes a variety of programs and other opportunities designed purposefully given the realities of adolescent brain development. As important as programming is, too often programming is the only component in an intervention strategy. Programming must be accessed as part of an overall intervention strategy and should include the support of an intentional relationship with a caring and supportive adult.

Providing evidence-based programming that emphasizes cognitive-behavioral strategies and is delivered by well-trained staff is one of the eight evidence-based principles for effective interventions with adult offenders (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). Additionally, the OJJDP promotes the positive effects of good programming in its Model Program Guide.[6]

Young people should be connected to educational opportunities, employment/vocational opportunities, religious opportunities, counseling/therapy, and other programming that is developed with an understanding of adolescent brain development. Furthermore, young people should be connected to programs that address their particular dynamic risk factors for criminal behavior, which could include: antisocial attitudes, isolation from pro-social associates, dysfunctional family relationships, weak social and problem-solving skills, substance abuse issues, temperament and behavioral challenges (e.g., egocentrism, impulsivity, aggression), and educational and vocational deficiencies (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). Additionally, many young people need to learn positive parenting skills.

Employment/vocational opportunities are among the most important types of programming for this population given the fact that the lack of economic opportunities for inner-city young people has led many gang members to continue gang membership rather than "grow out" of their gangs and enter conventional adult roles (Center for the Study and

> There is a difference between programs and programming. Programs tend to be boxed ways of operating, which, if done in the proscribed way and with fidelity to the model, should achieve the intended results. Programs are designed with a specific population and geography in mind. Programs are targeted and time specific. On the other hand, programming is the overall way we try to structure opportunities to build competence in certain areas. For example, we may decide to provide literacy programming to our young people, which may include certain model literacy programs.

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[6] See "Helpful Resources" for more about the Model Programs Guide.

Prevention of Violence, 2008). Some programs may be individual, others may be group based. Some may be in the community, and others may be in residential settings. Some may be long term, while others may be short term. Whatever the case, while our young people are in these programs, we must support them as they access these resources. Programs should be accessed while keeping the young person's readiness and abilities in mind. For example, many young people who say they want jobs are not quite ready for them or even ready for a job training program. If so, a pre-job training program would be more appropriate. Thus, job readiness programming should include an array of programs, services, and other supports available to young people as they learn employment skills.

Ideally, programs should be evidence based, a term used to describe those programs which researchers have shown to actually work. Implementing programs without positive and statistically significant research findings is at best a waste of time, and at worst detrimental to young people and the community. Additionally, programs should be implemented in the way they were intended – with fidelity to the model. Program implementers must take the time to learn how programs should be implemented and implement them in that exact way; if not, positive results are far less likely. At the same time, many evidence-based programs are not intended for this very at-risk population ages 14-24. If this is the case, we must utilize relevant aspects of successful programs and avoid ineffective strategies throughout overall programming. When implementing newly-designed programs, it is more important to track outcomes since the strategy has not already been shown to work.

Example of Successful Pre-Employment Programming

Roca implements a program called Transitional Employment Programming, a unique model for disengaged young people that combines transformational relationships (an intensive case management model) and transitional employment to help young people learn and practice the proficiencies they need to get a job and stay employed, while at the same time providing the social supports and skill development necessary to curb the trend of youth violence. This work-based model is critical to the re-engagement of high-risk young people, connecting them with something that is "real," providing them with a positive alternative to life on the streets, and, ultimately, moving them towards more positive life-choices and economic self-sufficiency.

The strategy includes: 1) wrap-around supports for young people as they move through the stages of change in order to become ready to obtain, maintain, and succeed at work, while reducing other risk factors; 2) transitional employment for 9-12 months, and potentially longer, using a line of sight work crew model; 3) soft skills, education services, and life skills; 4) re-hire process for young people to re-engage in the transitional employment programming until able to successfully complete transitional employment and be ready for unsubsidized employment; and, 5) job placement and retention/advancement support for up to one year after job placement (for more information see Appendix 4).

When referring young people to certain programs, we must always keep in mind the unique individual and community. Although a program might work well for one young person, it may not work well for another. Make sure the young person is at the appropriate developmental level for a chosen program. When a young person does not fit within a certain program, new programs should be accessed.

When young people fail in a program, it is part of the learning process. Supportive adults can help the young people prepare for failure and learn from it so that they can keep progressing toward their goals. Programs that work with these disengaged young people require patience. It is much more than just providing them with an opportunity – young people need support to be able to take advantage of that opportunity. What is most important to learn about programming is that it is only one part of intervention work. Programs and

programming are vital in helping young people make positive changes in their lives, but too often, this is the only available intervention. Not surprisingly, when young people are put into programs without additional elements of intervention work, the program fails them. We must use programs and programming as part of our overall intervention strategy and not as our only strategy.

Organizational Partnerships

Collaborations are vital in ensuring that young people living in harm's way are supported as they try to change. Collaborations serve many purposes. They ensure that someone is "out there" at all times. Through collaborations, we can surround young people. We can be available for young people like we would be for our own children. Additionally, when things are out of control, the strengths of the individual members can complement each other. The leaders can change depending on the situation, and with trust, these partnerships can transform a community.

Collaboration Helps Share Risk: For many, working with difficult young people is risky. We put a lot into programming, but it often takes times to witness positive results. Support from other community and system entities helps to share the risk and make any failures less likely to derail the entire program.

Collaborations Improve Knowledge: Agencies and organizations can share data and best practices so that outcomes can be tracked, programs can be implemented effectively, hot spots can be targeted, and ineffective strategies can be eliminated. Police can educate others about gang problems and how to identify gangs, youth workers can educate police on young people's strengths, school personnel can educate police about potential conflicts among young people, and so on. Coalitions can help members think in a comprehensive manner, improve their knowledge of community assets and risks, and understand more deeply what is unique about their community.

Collaborations Help Better Serve Individual Young People: Collaborations can share specific information about certain young people in order to better target and organize services. At the same time, we must be cognizant of the possible negative effects of this information sharing. How can we make sure this information

Example of Successful Collaboration: Operation Nightlight

Boston's Operation Nightlight exemplifies interagency coordination and has gained national recognition for its success in reducing youth violence. Operation Nightlight targets high-risk probationers to ensure compliance with terms of probation and to provide support to probationers in seeking positive alternatives to criminal behavior. The approach is a comprehensive strategy of prevention, intervention, and enforcement that involves both the public and private sectors. Important components include research, community policing, aggressive prosecution of gun and gang-related crimes, and interagency cooperation and coordination. Police and probation officers patrol the streets together at night to ensure that offenders are complying with the terms of probation. They also visit probationers' homes, schools, and worksites to increase the probation officers' presence and dissuade offenders from violating the conditions of probation. In addition to strengthening the relationships between offenders and probation and police officers, the probation and police officers forge relationships with each other, which in turn encourages information sharing and further collaborative efforts. Since Operation Night Light's inception, compliance with probation orders has dramatically increased.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996; and Boston Police Department Website

sharing is helpful to the young person and not harmful?

Collaborations Keep the Message Consistent: The message that harmful behaviors are not acceptable and that young people deserve to be supported while they try to change should come consistently from various entities that surround young people day to day. *When young people hear the same message from different entities, in different places, at different times of the day, the effect is much stronger than when just one organization is sending that message.* Research on prevention strategies has shown the effectiveness of changing the environment where young people live. Environmental strategies aim to change or influence community standards, institutions, structures and attitudes that shape individuals' behaviors. Whereas individual strategies focus on helping people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to change their behaviors, environmental strategies focus on creating an environment that makes it easier for people to act in healthy ways. Without the backup of environmental strategies, programs targeting individuals may find their effectiveness undercut by external pressures (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). Collaborations help to create a consistent environment for young people as they make their way through the stages of change to improve their lives.

Collaborations Show Young People How to Work Together: When police collaborate with youth workers, young people see the importance of working together in a helpful way. Young people see that everyone needs help and that no one can do it alone. They also see someone they trust working collaboratively with authority figures such as police officers and probation/parole officers. This is important behavior that young people need to observe and model.

Coalitions Vary in Their "Give and Take": Coalitions benefit the community and exist to achieve the goals of the collaboration; individual relationships may vary in their "give and take." In all collaborations some members give more than others. Additionally, some members give in different ways. For example, when police develop relationships with youth workers, they must understand and accept that there is a one-way relationship, at least at first. Police will give youth workers information to help them in their work, but youth workers will not give police information in the beginning stages of the relationship. This "give and take" is important to realize, and all involved must understand the implications. Coalitions and inter-agency/departmental/organizational work is not about making sure everyone puts in equal effort – it is about achieving goals.

Collaborative Decision Making Leads to Better Decisions: Various perspectives contribute to better decisions, especially in high-risk, highly-ambiguous situations, such as those we encounter when deciding how to direct, manage, and support young people. Sharing knowledge, information, and perspectives can lead to a more effectively integrated and creative plan that gets shared and reinforced through various stakeholders in the young person's life. Sharing information about how the young person is doing with regard to the plan leads to a more complete picture of the young person and better informed decisions.

In order to work, coalitions must be intentional and dedicated to the long term. They cannot be based solely on money. Everyone has a role to play within a coalition. While the coalition should have common, shared goals, each individual contribution is unique. We do not want police to become youth workers or youth workers to become police. What we do want is an effective, working relationship among agencies, departments, and organizations that help keep our young people alive. Coalitions must involve both system people and community people to utilize various types of leverage and to bridge the disconnect between nonprofit and agency cultures. Coalitions can promote a culture that creates a unified understanding. Coalitions must be committed to a complex, comprehensive way of thinking about how business is done. Coalition members should understand each others' missions and know what other organizations and agencies do. Members should also take ownership of work and be willing to change in order for the work to be done. If members have not had to give up anything to be a part of the coalition, they might not really be engaged. This work is challenging, and through collaboration we can better appreciate the very different places from which individuals and groups come. Building meaningful relationships takes work, but it is certainly worth it.

Suppression

When situations in the community become really dangerous, that danger must be addressed. We do not want communities to be out of control. Because of this, suppression must be part of intervention work. While we think of prevention-intervention-suppression as a continuum, suppression is an important tool in overall intervention work. Youth workers cannot view suppression as something to avoid at all costs; at the same time, police officers cannot view suppression as their only job. Suppression, if utilized strategically, can be part of an effective intervention strategy.

Just like any other skill used to serve young people, effective suppression techniques should be learned by police. Building relationships with young people and demonstrating consistent fairness ahead of time will make an arrest less problematic. Choosing the right supervisors to

support the officers who work closely with young people is important. Officers should be trained to have positive dialogue with young people and to de-escalate situations. They should also understand adolescent brain development and its implications. A young person's reaction may be much different than an adult's reaction, and the officer should understand how to best manage both situations successfully.

There are two types of suppression: individual suppression and neighborhood suppression. Individual suppression refers to the arrest of an individual who is causing problems in the community. Neighborhood suppression refers to an organized strategy by police to aggressively target neighborhood hotspots involving many individuals. Collaboration among youth workers, police, and other adults working with young people is important in making sure arrests are conducted respectfully and effectively.

Individual Suppression: Whether for the safety of the community or because there are no options left, arrest and/or incarceration may be the only viable option for a young person engaging in harmful behaviors. Youth workers and police on the street must work together closely to identify when a young person can no longer be served in the community. The arrest must be done respectfully so as to maintain the important relationships that have been built. Arrest should not be the first contact a young person has with the police nor the last. Because relationships have already been built, young people should see an arrest as a fair consequence of their actions (if not immediately then eventually with more work through the stages of change). Individual suppression is easier when there are good relationships among the young person, the youth workers, and law enforcement. The arrest should not define who the young person is in the mind of the police. Opportunities to meet after and outside of the crisis period can be healthy and productive for both.

Neighborhood Suppression: Neighborhood suppression is conducted when a certain neighborhood is considered dangerous. Normally there are numerous complaints by neighbors who feel scared by the concentration of crime. Since police are responsible for making the area safe and must respond to political and community pressure, they saturate the area and take a zero tolerance approach. It is more challenging to maintain good relationships with young people and youth workers during neighborhood suppression. During neighborhood suppression, police-youth interaction is not positive, and no one gets a break. This is where tensions arise between youth workers and police. Because of this, law enforcement and youth workers need to work together even better. Youth workers need to understand why police departments conduct neighborhood suppression and the importance of responding to neighbors' fears. If youth workers understand the reason behind the neighborhood suppression, they are more likely to effectively explain it to the young people who are affected ("the police feel they have to take this action because the neighborhood is in fear and they have the right to feel safe"). Before a neighborhood suppression, police should communicate with youth workers and make attempts to be as fair as possible during this difficult zero tolerance situation. Although it is difficult to negate the tension that will result, with increased collaboration, youth workers and police can spread the same message and stay consistent. No one wants younger, less problematic youth to be caught up in sweeps. Increased communication can help prevent this. Additionally, after each neighborhood suppression, there should be a debriefing with police and youth workers to work out issues in order to improve for the next time and to develop the mechanisms to make neighborhood sweeps more effective in the future.

Although suppression is an important component of an intervention strategy, it must be stressed that, "most researchers who have studied correctional interventions have concluded that without some form of human intervention or services there is unlikely to be a significant effect on recidivism from punishment alone" (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2006, p. 521). While locked up, we must continue to help the young person move through the stages of change. Suppression cannot occur in a vacuum but must be part of an overall intervention strategy and include support for the young person during this relapse. During relapse, the traditional system is used intentionally as a consequence for harmful behaviors. If young people are sufficiently supported, they should learn from the consequence. Once part of the system, there are additional places where young people can build responsibility. For example, within the traditional probation or parole system, young people can be engaged in deciding certain mandated activities such as where they receive their education or counseling.

To be a truly successful part of an intervention strategy, suppression must be done intentionally and with the young person's individual human development at the center of the decision. Research-based strategies should also be utilized. This is a good opportunity for systems to engage community organizations. Reentry services must be provided, and young people must be supported as they access these services.

Family and Community Involvement

Programs and policies should be family-centered...as well as culturally and developmentally appropriate. Research has shown that small, community-based programs are more effective and less costly than correctional institutions, for the majority of children who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. Rather than removing children from their families and communities, which only increases their difficulties and sense of marginalization, most youth can be managed in their communities while they receive a full range of rehabilitative services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Mental Health America, 1999

Individuals do not exist in a vacuum. When developing strategies, we must keep in mind the realities of the family and community structures in which young people live. Programs that involve family can be more effective in helping a person change than individual strategies alone. When possible, families should be involved. Reducing the risk factors in the community as a whole is also a desirable outcome in any large-scale intervention work.

Families: Involving the family can be a successful strategy in supporting young people as they goes through the stages of change. Many of the model programs stress family involvement as a key component of success. Families can be involved by conducting home visits and inviting families to participate in peacemaking circles.[7] Additionally, by

> "…father's incarceration is associated with a 62% increase in adult son's criminal behavior and also increases likelihood of arrest by 92%. Father's incarceration, when combined with substance abuse and dropping out of high school, is associated with a 44% predicted chance incurring arrest between ages 18-24. Interpreting these findings in context of sanctions incurred by ex-offenders, I suggest that the prison boom of the 1980's and 1990's may form class-like structure of criminal offenders in American society, while perpetuating black-white inequality due to racial disparities in incarceration."
> - Roettger, 2007, abstract

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[7] See Peacemaking Circles on page 39.

building relationships with family members, we may identify needs for services and possibly prevent a sibling from following in the same footsteps as an older brother or sister. Many young people are introduced to crime through family networks. Working closely with families to disrupt the harmful influence of these networks is challenging but can yield lasting results. _Since much of crime is intergenerational, focusing on the whole family, when possible and sensible, is a proven effective strategy in helping young people change for the better._

Most of us agree that parenting style has a lot to do with the behavior that young people and ultimately adults choose to engage in. Neighborhood disorder, high poverty, and crime can increase the likelihood that youth will associate with negative peers and commit crime, but parenting practices are also quite influential (MacArthur Foundation, 2006). One study on reentry found that parents who knew where their teens were, knew their friends, and established firm ground rules and expectations were more effective in keeping their children away from trouble, even when neighborhood influences could have been negative (Steinberg, 2006). Juvenile offenders who described their parents as warm and firm (sometimes labeled authoritative) were more mature, more academically competent, less prone to internalize distress, and less likely to engage in problem behavior than their peers. In contrast, adolescent offenders who described their parents as neglectful (neither warm nor firm) were less mature, less competent, and more troubled. Young people who characterized their parents as authoritarian (firm but lacking warmth) or indulgent (warm but lacking firm) fell somewhere between the two extremes. Although youth returning to more fragile neighborhoods are at higher risk, how successfully parents monitor their children matters and can help mitigate the negative influences of the neighborhood (2006).

However, what do we do when positive family involvement is not an option? What do we do when parents are dangerous or do not want to be involved with their children? What about older youth and young adults? Is it possible to identify a caring adult outside of your agency that can provide some of the same support a parent can?

Communities: Engaging ongoing support in natural communities is one of the eight evidence-based principles for effective interventions with adult offenders (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). Additionally, much research points to the benefits of keeping juveniles in their communities as opposed to sending them to residential facilities. In order to successfully implement intervention strategies, we need to understand the realities of the community where our young people live. This understanding serves two main purposes: 1) it helps to understand cultural norms in order to develop appropriate programming and strategies, and 2) it creates the foundation for understanding how the community environment must change in order to best support young people as they

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> ***Example of Successful Family Intervention from Boston's Youth Service Providers Network (YSPN)***
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> Over a six-month period, Boston police officers in District B-3, Mattapan, responded to 19 calls for help to a home with a mother and her five children. The children ranged in age from 10 to 17. Several of the children had a history of assaults on people outside the family. The father had been killed in a stabbing. The mother had a gambling problem and a history of assaults. An officer who had repeatedly responded to service calls for this family referred the case to the YSPN district based social worker. This social worker worked with the family for a six-month period during which there were only six calls for service, a reduction of over two-thirds. The older son clearly responded to the social worker's outreach; thus one of the needs identified by the referring police officer, for an adult male counselor, was met. The other children were referred to after-school programs. The mother was coaxed into a parenting class, which has significantly improved her effectiveness as a parent and her interactions with her children. Calls for police service in the third six-month period dropped from six to two. (Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, November, 2007)

develop. Community risk factors must be identified and assets must be overlaid where necessary.

Involving the community can also help community members become more understanding of young people's needs and to be more supportive of intervention strategies. Frequently, community members are scared or at the very least annoyed by much of the behaviors of the young people we serve. They may want the problem to just go away, to just get the kids locked up. It is important that as we work to help our young people, we also educate the community on why our work is important and how it will improve the standard of living in the community as a whole.

Be Strategic about the Timing of Programming

If we are focused on outcomes, what is the most effective strategy and when can we implement it? What time period is best for targeting intervention services? When do we want to focus more on suppression and when do we want to focus more on services? We may want to target services when crime is at its highest to provide alternatives for young people. Other times of the day can also be effective depending on what services are provided. No matter what time services are provided, geographic locations must be strategically chosen based on crime data and knowledge of the community.

We did not come to a conclusion that one time period was more important than another for intervention services. We did, however, discuss which intervention services may be better at certain times, specifically late at night. Whether youth workers should be on the street late at night was not resolved. What we did come away with were a few key questions: If youth workers are on the street late at night, what are the measurable objectives? How can youth workers avoid the drama of the street and becoming "just another player on the street" during these hours? How can youth workers and police officers best work together during this time?

Both independent research and information gathered in conversations with key stakeholders in Greater Boston demonstrate that the following three time periods are important times to focus services:

After-School Time: Researchers have shown that violent juvenile crime peaks in the afternoon between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., the hour at the end of the school day. Additionally, 19% of all juvenile violent crimes occur in the four hours between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on school days (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

Night Time: Nationally, a significant percent of violent crime occurs at night (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008), and according to independent researchers, the largest percentage of robberies by juveniles occurs around 9:00 p.m. (Gottfredson & Soule, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Nighttime may be a good opportunity for youth workers to partner with police who have the capacity to work late at night. It is important to sustain the coordinated message given to young people during the day and to maintain a presence in the community after dark. However, this can be a dangerous time when young people are high or drunk and unable to engage in useful conversations with youth workers. If youth workers are not present, police can sustain the message that harmful behavior is not acceptable with or without the youth worker. There are benefits and drawbacks to providing non-policing intervention services at night. Youth workers who provide services late at night must avoid becoming another "player in the game on the street." Being on the street and trying to work with young people when they are high may not be the most effective strategy. Any intervention provided at night must be as intentional as other parts of the intervention strategy, and this nighttime outreach cannot be the only intervention provided. It is also important to make sure youth workers are safe during this time. If youth

workers are working at this time, partnership with police is even more important. Some of these realities might suggest different policing strategies as opposed to youth work strategies.

Day Time: When young people are not attending school and are not working, the workday time is a time when services are vitally needed. Roca has found that by focusing intensive employment services from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., they have had more of an effect than when they are on the street late at night.

Given that many time periods are risky for young people and that young people could be in need of intervention support at any time of the day, partnerships are vital to making the intervention strategy comprehensive. Most organizations are unable to provide services all day and all night, so they must target programming during times that are most conducive to preventing violence. While it is important to assess when the riskiest times of the day are for young people, it is equally important to evaluate the comparative advantage that each organization has. For example, if an organization excels at providing a certain intervention service at a certain part of the day, that organization should stick to what it does best rather than try to change its strategy for a different hour.

Organizations do, however, need to collaborate with other organizations and agencies to make sure some entity is providing intervention services for as many hours of the day as possible. Like other parts of intervention work, organizations must evaluate their effectiveness in providing programming at different times of the day. If programming is not working, change it. If the hours of operation are not working, change them. What is important is that someone be out there all (or most) of the time to keep the message consistent to young people engaging in risky behaviors. Young people benefit from a "healthy paranoia" that various collaborating agencies are watching them at all times. We want to do this in a positive way, demonstrating to young people that the community supports them in their quest for positive change.

Be Aware of the Risks of Grouping Antisocial Young People

Many reports warn of the dangers of mixing lower-risk young people with higher-risk young people (Dodge, Dishion & Lansford 2006; Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Weisman, 2001; Latessa & Lowencamp, 2006; National Institutes of Health, 2004). It is counterproductive to take young people off the streets and then expose them to more delinquent influences within our programs. The effectiveness of programs for reducing delinquency will depend on their ability to address the social competencies, social bonding, and inadequate supervision that can actually produce delinquency within our programs during after school hours (Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Weisman, 2001). Group risk factors must be mitigated for the intervention programming to work.

The Importance of Staff Creating a Safe Space when Working with Groups of Young People:

Deviant peer influences can occur when a youth perceives the group norms for behavior and displays those behaviors, and then the peer group positively reinforces those behaviors. One study found that among girls in a residential facility, peers were more likely to respond to a youth's behavior than were staff, which gave peers greater power to shape behavior. Over two thirds of peers' responses to deviant acts were reinforcing, whereas non-deviant behaviors were typically punished by the girls. Staff did not consistently punish or reinforce any behavior (Dodge, Dishion & Lansford 2006).

This discussion topic was one of the most difficult for the group. Once young people are deeply engaged in violence and delinquency, is this type of grouping still a risk for them? What about the risks they are already exposed to in their own families and peer groups?

Discussions with key stakeholders in the Boston area uncovered various ideas about this difficult topic. Some felt that as long as young people are busy and the program is structured, grouping is more beneficial than detrimental once young people are engaged in a certain level of dangerous behaviors. At this point, the peer group may have less of an influence. Most agreed, however, that *lower-risk young people should not be mixed in with higher-risk young people* to prevent the worsening of lower-risk young people's behaviors. Additionally, programming should include individual follow-up in addition to the group message to mitigate possible negative influences.

Whether or not we think grouping delinquent young people together is harmless, beneficial, or potentially dangerous, this grouping may be the only way programming is possible given the high cost of individual strategies. Research points to the following recommendations to mitigate these potentially negative effects (Dodge, Dishion & Lansford 2006):

- **Modestly Antisocial[8] Young Adolescents Should Not be Aggregated in Groups:** This is the most important recommendation in the Dodge, Dishion and Lansford (2006) article, and a point we continually make throughout this document. Additionally, the Dodge report concluded that grouping modestly antisocial young people is detrimental because it fosters labels for the group by the individual, other group members, and outside observers; this exerts important influence on both the young person and on external judges through self-fulfilling prophecies.

- **Amount of Time in a Group Should be Minimized:** The amount of time that a young person spends in a setting with more antisocial peers should be minimized.

- **Opportunities for Unstructured Interaction with Antisocial Peers Should be Minimized:** When antisocial young people are placed together, they should not be allowed to interact freely or without supervision by trained adults. Care should be taken to minimize interaction before and after group sessions.

- **Program Directors Should Create and Maintain a Prosocial Peer Culture:** Strategies include minimizing the ratio of delinquent to non-delinquent young people in a group, maximizing the ratio of adult leaders to young people, and infusing an already prosocial group with new delinquent members only gradually and only while maintaining positive peer culture.

- **Group Settings Should be Highly Structured and Led by Well-Trained Adult Leaders:** Training and supervision of adult leaders is essential. Nondirective open discussions among groups of antisocial youth should be avoided.

These recommendations have serious implications in the work we do, especially if our programming is set up to work with youth in group settings. At the same time, do the recommendations pertain to all youth? What about older, less vulnerable young people? What about young people who already spend time with delinquent family and/or peers? Wouldn't it be better to have them together in a group with supportive adults offering a different perspective?

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[8] Although the article used the word, *deviant*, we choose to use the word, *antisocial*.

If we work in a community with many delinquent young people, is it realistic or even helpful to separate them? If we couple group work with individual work, can we mitigate potential negative influences?

Dispute Resolution

Individuals working with young people in harm's way must either have the capacity to resolve and prevent conflict or have developed partnerships with other entities that can do so. Dispute resolution strategies can include mediation, conferencing, circles, or others. Additionally, effective relationships with young people can lead directly to the avoidance of fights and violence. Effective police officers or youth workers should be able to predict a violent situation and then prevent it by utilizing the strong relationships they have built not only with young people but with the institutions (schools, youth centers, church groups, etc.) that work closely with them. In crisis situations, police officers may believe that the only response is an arrest. Whether or not this is true, de-escalation skills can assist in better outcomes for everyone involved. Police officers and other adults working with young people must be able to de-escalate situations that frequently arise among young people who are still in the process of developing their judgment, problem-solving, and decision-making capacities. Simply saying "calm down" is not enough.

Proper Training and Supervision of Staff

Organizationally, supervisors and managers are vital in making intervention work successful. They must choose staff members and officers who have the capacity as well as the desire to work successfully with this population. Choosing the

> *Peacemaking Circles*
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> Peacemaking Circles can be used for many reasons, including dispute resolution. At Roca, circles are used with young people and families as an alternative communication method that allows them to deal with extremely painful and difficult issues, manage their own healing process, and make agreements that promote safety so they can live in a good and safe way. The approach involves participants sitting in a circle, preparing themselves to speak honestly and listen to each other respectfully, and taking turns speaking. In Roca's experience, these circles promote high quality discussions with participants taking responsibility for what they say, thereby engendering high levels of accountability. Circles are effective in identifying real issues and seeking appropriate solutions to conflict situations. Derived from aboriginal and native traditions, circles bring people together in a way that creates trust, respect, intimacy, good will, belonging, generosity, mutuality, and reciprocity. The process is never about changing others, but rather is an invitation to change oneself and one's relationship with the community. Circles can be effective in group settings where there is a desire for the following: healing rather than coercion; individual and collective accountability rather than only individual accountability; democratic, egalitarian and spiritual values; focus on the commonalities, instead of the differences between people; building community; and individual and collective change and transformation
> -Roca. 2007

best individuals and adequately training them is a challenge. Adults working intentionally with young people to help them live out of harm's way must care about young people and believe they can change. Training can improve and smooth out the rough edges, but it is hard to make a full turnaround. If a mature adult has the sincere desire to make a positive difference in the life of a young person, the necessary skills can usually be learned. Managers and supervisors must not only highly supervise their youth workers and officers, they must also support them, keep them motivated, be clear on expectations, be committed to a complex way of thinking about how business is done, and have long-term involvement and dedication to intervention work.

Continual Learning

We need to learn every day to be good enough to keep our young people alive. Youth workers, managers, directors, and members of coalitions must all continue learning in order to be most effective. New research findings come out every year. Additionally, we must take the time to learn from our own experiences as well as the experiences of others. What is working and what is not working? While most people in this field never have enough time, it is vitally important to evaluate the work being done in order to eliminate what is not working and expand on what is. Organizations must develop the structure to do this well, address the challenges, and attempt to mitigate the risks. We should create continual learning environments within our organizations and coalitions in order to learn from the most recent research as well as from our own processes and outcomes. **We need to be courageous enough to try new approaches, learn from mistakes, and improve.**

INEFFECTIVE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

With such limited resources, it is vital that when intervention strategies are developed they are effective. Programs that do not utilize effective methods are at high risk of being a waste of resources and can potentially be harmful to individuals and communities. It is important to avoid programs that do not work and that cause harm. Unfortunately, there are many intervention strategies which are implemented every day that have been proven not to work.

We have all been guilty of implementing ineffective strategies at one time or another. Here are a few specific examples of individuals implementing ineffective strategies. First, there are "the idealists:" we think that if it sounds like it should work and if we try really hard and if we are tough enough or if we care a lot, then it should work. Unfortunately, such positive willing does not necessarily work, and it is certainly not enough. Second are "the complacent ones:" we do what we do because that is what we do. We somehow receive the funding and support necessary to continue, but our ineffective strategies are never studied or challenged. Third are "the chosen ones:" the ones who run programs that receive good press and lots of publicity yet may not be implementing effective programming. This continues the cycle of ineffective programming and bad strategies*. If we are not utilizing proven effective strategies, we must at the very least avoid strategies that have been proven to cause harm;* we must continually measure impact to ensure that our work is resulting in positive changes.

Although much research still needs to be done on the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies, below are some examples of strategies that research and/or experience have shown to be ineffective in reducing crime or delinquency. We did not all agree on the negative impact of each of the following strategies; however, enough of us were wary of them that we felt they needed mentioning. The intention of this section is to stimulate discussion and learning in order to improve our approaches rather than to insult anyone who works hard every day for the benefit of our most at-risk young people.

Reinforcing Negative Group Identity

We must always be aware of the risks and unintended consequences of our strategies. One significant risk when working with antisocial groups like gangs is increasing group cohesiveness. Increasing any group's cohesiveness can increase group morale and productivity, and since the product of gangs is crime, our intentions could make the situation worse (Klein, 1995). According to the OJJDP (2008), training that increases community awareness about gangs can be a part of a comprehensive gang program, but strategies that publicize gangs may inadvertently serve to increase a gang's cohesion, facilitate its expansion, and lead to more crime (OJJDP, 2000). When we intervene with gangs, we must ensure that we do not increase their group cohesiveness. When we put information about gang truces in the newspaper or hold gang summits or publicize gangs in other ways, we must weigh the benefits of increasing community awareness with the potential drawbacks of reinforcing negative group behavior and negative group identity. *We must be intentional in all that we do and anticipate any unintended consequences.* Sensationalizing gang membership, drug use, prostitution, street violence, or any

other social problem may not only reinforce antisocial group identity, it may also encourage uninvolved young people to become involved. Before we act, we must ask ourselves, will our actions glamorize or sensationalize negative behaviors? Will our efforts unintentionally cause more harm than good? These are hard questions to ask and even harder to answer, but we must ask these challenging questions if we really want the best for our young people and our communities.

Taking an "Us versus Them" Approach

Building and sustaining organizational partnerships is one of the core elements of intervention work. Because of this, an "us versus them" approach almost never works.

"Us versus Them" on an Organizational Level: Youth workers must be passionate about their work. However, this passion must not lead to a confrontational style with systems. Although the young person may feel like the world is against him, the youth worker must not isolate the young person more by challenging the very agencies that could help him. Systems (DYS probation, police, etc.) also must not dismiss passionate community-based groups or take an "us versus them" approach either. They can be excellent partners.

"Us versus Them" on a Programmatic Level: *See "Military Boot Camps" and "Scare Tactics."*

"Us versus Them" Between Young People and Police: When trust between young people and police breaks down, positive outcomes are scarce for all involved parties. Police must develop trusting relationships with young people that demonstrate both the fairness of the system and the consistent consequences for certain actions. When arrests are necessary, they should be conducted with respect and in accordance with the law. Police need to make intentional efforts to build a positive relationship with young people. At the same time, community-based organizations must make efforts to build relationships with police so that young people learn to respect their role and trust them. Much of this can be learned by example. Are police officers friendly guests at community-based organizations where young people spend time? Do young people have the opportunity to observe youth workers and police working together for common, positive impacts? When young people challenge police (for example when young people get arrested and demand the police officer's badge number), it may increase the danger level. What are the benefits and drawbacks of teaching young people to do this? What are alternative ways to ensure that a young person's rights are not overlooked? How can we work together to maintain the safety of our communities when situations become uncontrollable? How can we work together to make sure young people understand the role of law enforcement? How can police officers support youth workers without losing their own unique role? How can youth workers support police officers without losing their unique role?

Fear of Failure, Lack of Risk-Taking

Effective intervention strategies often involve risk taking. Organizations must be willing to take risks both organizationally (such as developing partnerships with new community partners) and with young people (putting them in situations where they might fail).

Not Enough Structure in Relationships

We must have structure in our work with young people to help achieve positive outcomes. There must be clear goals and objectives for the young person and clear expectations for us. We cannot merely hang out with young people and expect change. The relationship needs to be intentional.

Lack of Accountability by Young Person

When working closely with young people, we cannot serve as someone who merely "gets them out of trouble." Young people must learn to be accountable for their actions, and we must be able to help them do so. One mistake many of us make is in trying to get young people out of the situations they put themselves in without holding them accountable. This only impedes growth. When an individual is able to admit what he has done, takes responsibility for the harm he has caused, and then makes amends, he is on the path to maturity and growth. We must have truthful conversations with young people, put limits on behavior, and hold them accountable for those limits.

Lack of Organizational Accountability

Organizations that work with young people need to be accountable too. We need to show up when we say we will show up, and we need to follow through. We need to relentlessly believe in our work and in the positive changes it can bring for young people and communities. This means more than just excellent youth work. It also means building organizations, programs, programming, and strategies that are sustainable and that will exist for the long term. Organizations need to be fiscally sound and require the organizational capacity to run year after year. As adults working with young people, we are responsible for navigating the complex world of funding and sustainability so that the work can continue.

Military-Style Boot Camps

Correctional programs for young people in military-style environments that emphasize discipline and physical conditioning have not been found effective in reducing recidivism. Numerous studies of adult and juvenile boot camps have shown that graduates do no better in terms of recidivism than offenders who are incarcerated or, in some cases, than those sentenced to regular probation supervision. In fact, some researchers have found that boot camp graduates are more likely to be re-arrested or are re-arrested more quickly than other offenders (Crime and Justice Institute, 2004; Mental Health America, 1999.; OJJDP Model Programs Guide, "Wilderness Camp," n.d.).

Involving Young People Who are not Engaged in Negative Behaviors in Intervention Programs

Involving low-risk young people in intervention programs can be harmful and undermine the strategy. Researchers have repeatedly demonstrated the dangers of grouping low-risk offenders with high-risk offenders both in residential and community-based settings (Dodge, Dishion & Lansford, 2006; Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Weisman, 2001; Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2006; National Institutes of Health, 2004). If the reality of the community or residential facility

necessitates that low-risk young people be grouped with high-risk young people, what strategies can be utilized to mitigate the risk?

Youth Workers who are not Able to Help Young People Get to the Next Level

Building intentional relationships with young people involves more than just persuading young people to confide in us. We need to be more than just a buddy. We must have the maturity, ability, and desire to work intentionally with young people to help them change. If we care too much about the young person liking us and do not create limits or a sense of accountability, the relationship is not intentional and does not serve its purpose of helping the young person change. For some of us, we have struggled through the same issues as our young people. This can be an asset, but if we are still working on our own issues, it can be detrimental. At the same time, if we act like know-it-alls who preach to young people and are unapproachable, this can also be ineffective. Finally, if a young person is putting more into the relationship than we are, the relationship will not work. We must be able to balance empathy and accountability and be relentlessly persistent in our outreach and support.

Quick Fixes

Intervention strategies must be long term in order to be effective. While some short-term programs or activities can be incorporated into overall strategies, quick fixes are never enough to help individuals who are currently living in harm's way.

Scare Tactics

Studies have shown that programs like Scared Straight, designed to deter delinquent youth from a life of crime by showing them life in prison, actually increase crime (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2002; National Institutes of Health, 2004; Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, n.d.). Additionally, confrontational programs like Scared Straight are ineffective in reducing recidivism among adult offenders (Crime and Justice Institute, 2006).

Developing Consequences when Young People do not Really Care about Changing yet

Intervention strategies must be developmentally appropriate and must utilize a framework such as the Stages of Change. If an individual is still in the pre-contemplation stage, developing consequences for not following through with new behavior is ineffective. This is also true with referrals to programs. Individuals must be in the action stage for programs to be useful. We must be able to identify and track the stages of change where a young person currently is.

Additional Ineffective Strategies for Reducing Recidivism

Although the following strategies may be appropriate for fulfilling other goals of criminal justice, they have been shown to be ineffective in reducing recidivism among adult offenders (Crime and Justice Institute, 2006):

- Drug education programs

- Drug testing alone

- Fostering self-esteem

- Insight-oriented psychotherapy

- Intensive supervision without treatment

- Non-action oriented group counseling

- Nondirective, client-centered counseling

- Physical challenge programs

- Prison alone

- Programs that target low-risk offenders

- Punishment alone

- Shaming offenders

The following programs have shown weak or no effects on reducing recidivism among serious juvenile offenders (Lipsey, Wilson & Cothern, 2000):

- Reduced caseload, probation/parole (Weak or no effects, inconsistent evidence)

- Wilderness/challenge (Weak or no effects, consistent evidence)

- Early release, probation/parole (Weak or no effects, consistent evidence)

- Deterrence programs (Weak or no effects, consistent evidence)

We believe the following:

> *If* we are intentional about what we do, learn from data and effective practices, and keep trying to do what works;

> *If* we are deliberate about how we use ourselves (any of us who work with young people) and how we work together (no matter how challenging it is);

> *If* we are mindful of the responsibility of this work;

> *If* we endlessly believe it is possible for young people, ourselves, and the community to change; and

> *If* we stay in the work,

THEN we can keep more young people alive, support them to live in a good way, be better adults (parents, youth workers, community partners, criminal justice professionals, police officers), and bring peace to our communities.

We must fully commit to this challenging work in order to actually impact individual and population outcomes. We must develop and commit to a strategy based on data and best practices. We must have the will to see the whole picture. We must measure outcomes and do what really works. We must resist the urge to become too program-focused. We must understand that it is not enough to say we care about young people and then just provide them with programs we think make sense – we must be willing to learn and change continually in order to make an impact. Resources and funding must be allocated to impact this group of very high-risk young people. However, we must also be able to offer appropriate and effective strategies worthy of the funding and resources, strategies that are worthy of the young people we serve. A continuum of services is necessary to shift the negative trajectory that many of our young people are on. Strategy must be developed first. Once strategy is developed and funded, programming that will fulfill the strategy should be designed and implemented.

We must involve organizations that care about young people and believe they can change. Our work must be targeted and based on data, individualized, intentional, outcome-focused, and long term. To truly succeed, these young people living in harm's way need outreach and youth work, programming, organizational partnerships, involvement of family and community, and responsive involvement of law enforcement that has the interests of both the individual and the community at the core of its mission.

Knowing what we know about adolescent brain development, we must also consider broader policy implications such as raising the age of adulthood to 18 and rethinking how both the juvenile system and the criminal justice system engage our most challenging young people. The ways in which structured institutions implement processes must be based on the emerging adolescent brain development science around reasoning, culpability, and treatment.

The real need of these disengaged 14-24 year olds is human development. The issues –
delinquency, early pregnancy, unemployment, prostitution, violence, school dropout – are
merely the symptoms of a lack in human development. Improving human development is the
need. We need to be the ones who help these young people learn how to learn, learn how to go
to work, learn how to live out of harm's way, learn how to develop concrete skills and
competencies to help them advance in their lives. We hope this document helps us better serve
and succeed with this very important population.

OJJDP Model Programs Guide: www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm
The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Model Programs Guide (MPG) is designed to assist practitioners and communities in implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that can make a difference in the lives of children and communities. The MPG database of evidence-based programs covers the entire continuum of youth services from prevention through sanctions to reentry. The MPG can be used to assist juvenile justice practitioners, administrators, and researchers to enhance accountability, ensure public safety, and reduce recidivism. The MPG is an easy-to-use tool that offers a database of scientifically-proven programs that address a range of issues, including substance abuse, mental health, and education programs.

Crime and Justice Institute: http://cjinstitute.org/
The Crime and Justice Institute is nonprofit agency based in Boston that provides nonpartisan consulting, policy analysis, and research services to improve public safety throughout the country. They work with a diverse group of practitioners and policymakers, including corrections officials, police, courts, and political and community leaders. Their primary goal is to make criminal and juvenile justice systems more efficient and cost-effective to promote accountability for achieving better outcomes.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence: http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html
In an effort to establish more complete and valuable information to impact violence-related policies, programs, and practices, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) works from a multi-disciplinary platform on the subject of violence and facilitates the building of bridges between the research community and the practitioners and policy makers. First, the Information Clearinghouse serves to collect research literature and resources on the causes and prevention of violence and provides direct information services to the public by offering online searchable customized databases. Second, CSPV offers technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs. Third, CSPV maintains a basic research component through data analysis and other projects on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs.

Appendix 1: Evidence Based Intervention Programs (OJJDP)

These following brief descriptions are all either paraphrased or copied directly from the OJJDP Model Programs Guide unless otherwise noted (http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm).

Aftercare: Aftercare services, which research has concluded is a promising approach to reducing recidivism, can be defined as re-integrative services that prepare out-of-home placed individuals for reentry in the community. The aftercare process must begin before an offender is released, ideally after sentencing. When individuals are back in the community, aftercare services must be provided in collaboration with the community and its resources. Aftercare requires the creation of a seamless set of systems across formal and informal social control networks as well as the creation of a continuum of community services to prevent the reoccurrence of antisocial behavior. It can also involve public–private partnerships to expand the overall capacity of youth services. The two key components to aftercare are: 1) offenders must receive services and supervision and 2) offenders must receive intensive intervention while incarcerated, during their transition to the community and when they are under community supervision. Aftercare is responsible for both helping to change individual behavior and protect the community.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/Treatment (CBT): Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/Treatment (CBT) is a problem-focused approach designed to help people identify and change the dysfunctional beliefs, thoughts, and patterns of behavior that contribute to their problems. It is the most evidence-based form of psychotherapy. Its underlying principle is that thoughts affect emotions, which then influence behaviors. CBT is active, problem focused, and goal directed. CBT emphasizes the present, concentrating on what the problem is and what steps are needed to alleviate it. It is easy to measure. Since the effects of the therapy are concrete (i.e., changing behaviors) the outcomes tend to be quite measurable. CBT should provide quick results. If the person is motivated to change, relief can occur rapidly. Studies provide consistent empirical evidence that CBT is associated with significant and clinically meaningful positive changes, particularly when therapy is provided by experienced practitioners (Waldron & Kaminer, 2004). CBT has been successfully applied across settings (e.g., schools, support groups, prisons, treatment agencies, community-based organizations, churches) and across ages and roles (e.g., students, parents, teachers). It has been shown to be relevant to people with differing abilities and from a diverse range of backgrounds. Problem behaviors that have been particularly amenable to change using CBT have been: 1) violence and criminality, 2) substance use and abuse, 3) teen pregnancy and risky sexual behaviors, and 4) school failure. Across the range of continuum-of-care, many model programs have successfully incorporated the strategies of CBT to effect positive change.

Day Treatment: Day treatment facilities (or day reporting centers) are highly structured, community-based, post-adjudication, nonresidential programs for serious juvenile offenders. The goal of day treatment is to provide both intensive supervision to ensure community safety and a wide range of services to the offender to prevent future delinquent behavior. The intensive supervision is fulfilled by requiring the offender to report to the facility on a daily basis at specified times for a specified length of time. Generally, programs are provided at the facility

during the day and/or evening at least five days per week. While there are no major impact evaluations examining the effectiveness of day treatment centers, several exploratory studies suggest that day treatment may be an effective intervention in reducing recidivism.

Family Therapy: Research suggests that improving family functioning should reduce problem behaviors. The major categories of interventions designed to strengthen family functioning include family skills training, family education, family therapy, family services, and family preservation programs. Examples of specific science based family strengthening programs include Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC). These science-based programs have produced many positive results including reductions in recidivism and re-arrests, reductions in out-of-home placements, reduction in subsequent sibling referrals, decreased aggression, decreased running away, and decreased expulsions from school.

Gun Court (short-term intervention): A gun court is a type of problem solving court that intervenes with youth who have committed gun offenses that have not resulted in serious physical injury. Most juvenile gun courts are short-term programs that augment rather than replace normal juvenile court proceedings. This basic model of juvenile gun court includes several principal elements including: 1) early intervention—in many jurisdictions, before resolution of the court proceedings; 2) short-term (often a single 2- to 4-hour session), intensive programming; 3) an intensive educational focus to show youth the harm that can come from unlawful gun use and the immediate response that will result when youth are involved with guns; and 4) the inclusion of a wide range of court personnel and law enforcement officials working together with community members (Sheppard and Kelly, 2002). Ana analysis of program outcomes in one of the more celebrated gun courts in Alabama revealed that the gun court helped to reduce recidivism.

Restorative Justice: Restorative justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behavior. Practices and programs reflecting restorative purposes respond to crime by: 1) identifying and taking steps to repair harm, 2) involving all stakeholders, and 3) transforming the traditional relationship between communities and government in responding to crime. Restorative justice seeks to involve the entire community in rehabilitating offenders and holding them accountable for their behavior. By bringing together victims, offenders, families, and other key stakeholders in a variety of settings, restorative justice helps offenders understand the implications of their actions and provides an opportunity for them to become reconnected to the community. Some of the most common programs typically associated with restorative justice include mediation and conflict resolution programs, restitution and community service, family group conferences, victim-offender mediation, and victim impact panels. If implemented properly, these programs have either proven to be effective or are promising in lowering recidivism, reducing offending, and improving victim satisfaction.

Since intervention work must be outcome-focused, indicators of success must be developed as the individual, organizational and community-level. This appendix includes examples of these indicators.

Individual Level Indicators of Success: Measurable goals and objectives must be established together with young people in order to track success. Some examples of measurable indicators of success include the following:

- Youth engagement in a positive, long-term, trusting relationship with a healthy adult (within or outside of the system)

- Reduction in offending

- Reduction in harmful behaviors (drugs, violence, etc.)

- Thriving/independence

- Increase in self-sufficiency (jobs, relationships, education, etc.)

- Reduction in commitment to DYS, sentence, arrest, etc.

Organizational Level Indicators of Success: Organizations must evaluate themselves and change in order to best respond to young people's needs. Self-reflection is vital in establishing and maintaining an organization that is responsive to the needs of our most at-risk youth. Organizational indicators of success can include internal changes (changes in business processes, collecting data, etc) and overall impact that the organization is having with the young people they serve. Some examples include the following:

- Changes the way data is collected

- Shift in thinking from crisis-based to long-term and solution-based

- Documented understanding of how the strategy is working

- Staff retention

- Impact with overall caseloads (what percent of the overall young people served have changed for the better?)

Community Level Indicators of Success: While improving the life of an individual is an end in itself, improving the health and safely of the overall community where a young person lives is a macro-level goal that most people feel strongly about. Although it is difficult to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between intervention work (or any work for that matter) and a reduction in crime, indicators must still be established and tracked to evaluate not only what changes may be occurring because of intervention work but also to evaluate where future needs may lie. Community level indicators can include the following:

- Reduction in criminal activity, which can include reduction in serious incidents, decreases in field investigation operations (FIO) and reduction in recidivism and DYS commitment lengths

- Sustained commitment for reentry

- Improvements in capacity such as a primary referral agency for police established (to use for very high-risk families)

- Improvements in the way data is collected

- Shift in thinking from crisis-based to long-term and solution-based

- Documented understanding of how the strategy is working

- Analysis of what current intervention agencies are doing now and figuring out if they are being utilized properly and enough

- Increased coordination among agencies

- Shared theory of change

- Diagram how agencies work together to measure increases in collaboration

- Putting things in writing, solidifying relationships and collaborations

- Improvements in communication between agencies (are agencies having conversations on a regular basis?)

- Clear messages from all involved in collaboration

Appendix 3: Examples of Individual Outcome Measures for Intervention Work[9]

This section gives a brief look at Roca's individualized outcome measures for youth. These measures track efforts and assessment necessary to show progress and outcomes. Roca measures movements of youth from one stage to the next in order to track progress toward outcomes.

Overall Relationship Outcomes

Phase 1: Develop a Transformational Relationship

- Participant negative towards program and staff

- Participant beginning to show interest, still no engagement (conversations, activities, field trips)

- Participant actively showing interest and beginning to engage (conversation, activities, field trips)

- Participant demonstrating willingness to trust in youth worker

- Participant ready for phase 2 transformational relationship

Phase 2: Transformational Relationships

- Participant has a service plan

- Participant actively working on services plan

- Participant beginning to show progress on one element of service plan

- Participant showing progress on all elements of service plan

- Participant sustaining progress on all elements of service plan

Behavior Change Outcomes for Phase 2 Service Plans

Decreasing Substance Abuse

- Participant denies problem and/or believes usage is not a barrier (pre-contemplation)

- Participant beginning to think usage affects things/causes added problems (contemplation)

- Participant identifies usage as problematic and is open to talking about how to deal with his/her substance use (planning)

- Participant actively accessing and receiving help in reducing/quitting usage (action)

- Participant sustaining decreased usage (sustaining)

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[9] All information in this section from Roca's Staff Development Guidebook, 2007.

Increasing Employment Engagement

- Participant not thinking about or wanting work (pre-contemplation)

- Participant thinking about the benefits of work and/or getting a job (contemplation)

- Participant referred to Employment Division for transitional employment/job placement (planning)

- Participant engaged in employment division (transitional employment/re-entry/job placement) (action)

- Participant place in employment and being tracked for retention (sustaining)

Decreasing Street/Gang Involvement

- Participant actively engaged in street/gang behavior and unwilling to see it as harmful (pre-contemplation)

- Participant beginning to think about the potential harm of street/gang involvement (contemplation)

- Participant discussing difficulties of street/gang involvement with youth worker and ways to shift behaviors/activities (planning)

- Participant actively attempting to engage in me positive activities such as education, employment, life skills, engagement spending more time at Roca (action)

- Participant maintaining engagement in positive activities and making progress on other goals (sustaining)

Appendix 4: Transitional Employment

Roca implements Transitional Employment Programming (TEP) for disengaged young people, which utilizes a unique model that combines transformational relationships (an intensive case management model) and transitional employment to help young people learn and practice the proficiencies they need to get a job and stay employed, while at the same time providing the social supports and skill development necessary to curb the trend of youth violence. This work-based model is critical to the re-engagement of high-risk young people, connecting them with something that is "real," providing them with a positive alternative to life on the streets, and, ultimately, moving them towards more positive life-choices and economic self-sufficiency.

The strategy includes: 1) a transformational relationship model (intensive case management) that provides wrap-around services and supports young people in order to become ready to obtain, maintain and succeed at work, while reducing other risk factors; 2) transitional employment for nine months to a year, and potentially longer, using a line of sight work crew model; 3) soft skills, education services, and life skills; 4) re-hire process for young people to re-engage in the transitional employment programming when they lose their job slot; and 5) assistance with non-subsidized job placement and support for up to one year after job placement (when young person is ready finished transitional job program).

Transformational Relationships: High-risk young people require intensive case management, making their relationship with the case manager critical to their success. Given the multitude of issues young people are facing (including violence, substance abuse and the inability of many of them to participate successfully in programming or the workforce), they need to be engaged in relationships and programming that allow them to move through the stages of change. It is essential to first spend the time to reconnect and re-engage them in positive relationships. Relationships create a connection that can hold the balance and the tension of growth and change for young people, ultimately resulting in change or transformation by engaging young people in a process of change that enables them to increase positive knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors over time and through the stages of change. These transformational relationships provide young people with the very thing lacking from many of their lives: the positive adult role model that will be able to assist them in developing appropriate decision making skills and curbing their tendency toward violent behavior. Following this model, case managers are trained in critical techniques, such as motivational interviewing and strengths-based case management, allowing them to guide youth through positive decision making. Case managers also provide life skills services and work with the young person through the stages of change related to high-risk behaviors that are barriers to self-sufficiency and living in safety. This will include making appropriate referrals for other services as needed, including substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling (including anger management), health care and pregnancy prevention and parenting.

Transitional Employment: TEP operates transitional employment work crews, designed to provide a viable alternative to violence and criminal activity for the young people they employ. Work crews are designed to provide a sheltered work experience where young people can learn to work by working. Each work crew has a crew supervisor providing line of sight supervision, ensuring that each young person is monitored and coached on work. Crews fulfill contracts with

the State, municipalities and other entities in the areas of cleaning, painting, maintenance, snow removal, landscaping and other types of work that do not require high levels of skill.   Each young person works 26 hours per week for minimum wage, providing them with viable work experience while ensuring that their next job will result in advancement.

Education, Training and Life Skills: Young people also participate in a minimum of 4-8 hours of education, employment readiness, and life skills programming. Employment readiness and training programming includes: literacy and math, computers, ESOL, career exploration, job readiness, resumes, interviews, job search, and additional training. Additionally the life skills program includes: conflict resolution and restorative justice skills, emotional literacy, substance abuse education (treatment if needed), connection with a health center, and support addressing a range of issues in their lives. Each of these components of programming works with young people "where they are at" and grow with the young person developmentally.

Re-Hire: Understanding that an important component of the project must include the ability to turn failure into learning, the project is also designed with a re-hire process for young people who lose their work slot. If a young person "blows out" of the work component, they will still have access to other programming and the relationship they have established with the case manager. The relationship with a case manager is essential to a young person being re-hired into the program after losing his/her slot, a relapse, or "blow out" (which literally means loose the work slot do to inappropriate work behaviors). Case managers are trained and coached in a proactive model of outreach and follow-up and will do everything possible, for as long as it takes, to engage, re-engage and maintain engagement of young people in programming. When a young person loses the work slot, the case manager is present to help him take the steps necessary to return to work, literally using their relationship to re-engage the young person in a re-hire process for the work component.   Over time the hope is that when young people lose or "blow out" of their job slot, the time it takes for them to re-enter decreases and attendance and performance in the work slot increases. The evaluation system is able to track this data. In this way, the failures become the opportunity for learning and skill development.

Job Placement: Upon successful completion of their transitional employment, young people work with a job developer to find full-time entry-level employment or continued education. The job developer works on placement efforts until a placement is secured and then focuses on retention support with the young person and their case manager. At any point in the process, job developers work on rapid job replacement if the young person loses employment. Case managers, for up to one year after completion, follow young people.

Retention And Advancement: Case managers continue to meet with new employees a minimum of three times per week for up to one year after they are placed in any of the full time employment positions described above. These meetings are used to ensure that participants continue to be engaged and continue to receive the supports necessary to work through their barriers to employment (i.e. receiving assistance with child care issues, issues with the corrections system, problems on the job site, etc.) After six months of retention, the job developer begins to work with the young person on longer-term career planning and job advancement. The case manager provides ongoing support to the young person for at least one year after placement; this will include support to address life issues and work on long-term career goals.

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