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Moving PHD into Practice

OYA is working toward creating **developmentally appropriate environments**. A developmentally appropriate environment means that things like our interactions, our physical spaces, and activities help youth to develop the skills they need to in order to grow into young adulthood. Our goal is to create places that allow youth and staff to attach to prosocial things, create a sense of belonging and also learn and practice new skills. We know that the adolescent brain has the best chance to learn in an environment that fosters growth. We also know that skill development is the key to our youth being able to live crime free productive lives. Knowing this, leaders from Facilities Services have been working in collaboration with Development Services to set clear expectations that will provide the best foundation for creating developmental environments and realizing our goal of creating a true PHD culture.

These practices will provide clear direction. You can think of it as a “playbook” on how the basics of our everyday work can best support a PHD environment. These “basics” are called Fundamental Practices, and if done well, they will assist program development and provide a standard of excellence to work toward. Being successful in these practices requires initial and ongoing training, support, and strong leadership.

Clean, Safe, and Organized Living Unit

1

Practice

Actions

PHD Focus:

Safety and Security

Developmental Principle:

Pleasant, normative environments communicate that youth and staff are seen as valuable resources



Why?

This was selected as a fundamental practice because we know our environments matter. The environment staff work in and youth live in should make us feel safe and secure, comfortable and valued. This is foundational to building a healthy culture – it’s where it all starts!

Cleaning - Post an organized chore list and ensure it is consistently followed

Chores completed a minimum of twice a day and are a *joint* effort between staff and youth

Property list is monitored with guidelines and are followed consistently

Searches of areas and youth are conducted regularly, managed with utmost respect, and documented in JJIS

Counts and location of youth, sharps, and tools are completed regularly and documented in JJIS

Storage guidelines are posted and consistently followed to support clean and organized spaces

Maintenance – Issues are responded to immediately

Good personal hygiene is modeled by staff and practiced by youth

Clean, Safe, and Organized Living Unit

What it looks like:



Organized youth and staff spaces with the absence of clutter



Clean floors and spaces



Minimal contraband



Smells clean



Unit items/equipment are maintained, accounted for, and organized



No long-term maintenance issues that impact safety and security



Staff/youth have sense of pride in unit



Staff/youth feel physically safe



Youth feel property is respected during searches

Interactive Youth and Staff Engagement

2

Practice

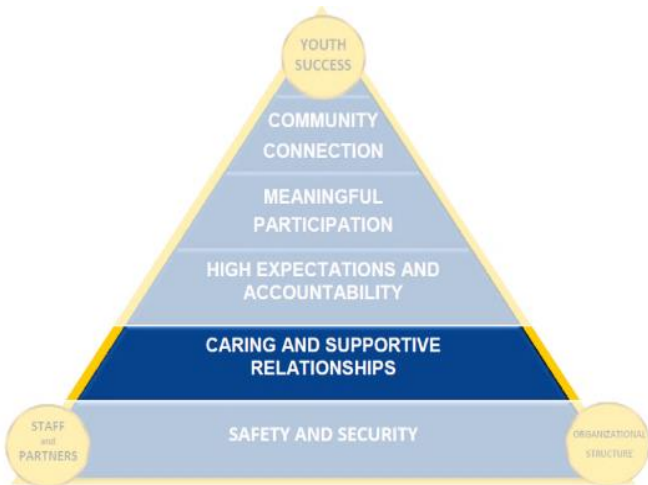
Actions

PHD Focus:

Caring and Supportive Relationships

Developmental Principle:

Right use of power - working WITH, not doing TO or FOR
 (we are working with people, not doing things to them or for them)



Why?

This practice is based on what we know works with people...relationships! When we authentically invest in the lives of each other, we are providing opportunities to attach and belong to a team and community, and to see each other as a resource. It is also essential to have staff integrated consistently with youth, and leaders integrated with staff for awareness and early intervention to resolve conflicts and address problems at the lowest level.

Participate with youth in activities, including recreation, education, treatment, meals, skill-building and free time

Daily Schedule is posted, predictable, and youth are engaged in constructive activities - Staff are leading and guiding schedules

Primary staff have regular and focused time with assigned youth to develop rapport and support skill building; with a minimum of monthly documentation in JJIS

Positive youth engagement tracking systems are set up for efficient and timely documentation in JJIS

Staff make an effort to engage with youth families

Staff and youth collaborate on goal development

Clear understanding of what staff can and cannot do for youth

Interactive Youth and Staff Engagement

What it looks like:



Youth are engaged in constructive activities



Youth and staff feel emotionally and psychologically safe



Active involvement among youth and staff



Normalized, friendly communication between staff, youth, and families



Interaction between all community members is healthy and occurring consistently



Staff are informed and knowledgeable of youth services and skill development needs



Youth believe staff have their best interest in mind

Developmentally Appropriate Milieu and Services

3

Practice

Actions

PHD Focus:

High Expectations and Accountability

Developmental Principle:

People as resources



Why?

This practice is where the rubber meets the road. It is skill-building. Everyone is different and we all come with a variety of skills. In order for us to develop, we need to have high expectations that are reasonable and rising for our skill level. Expectations and goals are tailored to allow successes and challenge growth. Consequences are effective if they relate to the issue, are immediate, and include a learning component.

Youth expectations are individualized, reasonable, and rising

Services, consequences and incentives are developmentally appropriate, individualized and focuses on skill building and shaping behavior

Safe opportunities are provided for youth to practice making reasonable choices and decisions when appropriate

Youth have input on the level system, consequences, and incentives

Emphasis on positive reinforcement, including verbal, nonverbal, written, and environmental

Behavior is addressed appropriately and timely

Staff role modeling skills:

- Behavior
- Communication
- Interpersonal skills

Recognition and celebration of achievements and accomplishments

Youth individually assigned services and progress are visually available for youth and staff (White/magnetic board)

Positive signage is posted neatly and prominently to visually reinforce program principles

Developmentally Appropriate Milieu and Services

What it looks like:



Youth move toward identified goals or achievement



Youth are developing and practicing new skills



Youth support each other



Youth and staff feel they are viewed as a resource



Youth progress through level system based upon their individual skill set and capabilities

Building Community

4

Practice

Actions

PHD Focus:

Meaningful Participation and Community Connection

Developmental Principle:

Attaching and belonging



Why?

We know building a sense of community and belonging supports physical, emotional and psychological safety, and that when people feel safe, they are more willing to learn new skills. Building processes for youth and staff to share their feedback and ideas encourages their creativity and innovation and creates investment and a sense of ownership. Also, our services and enrichment activities become more effective and interesting as staff and youth meaningfully engage in the development process.

Shift change info sharing occurs daily for staff between staff leaving and staff starting their day

Weekly community meetings to discuss community issues

Monthly staff meetings with a unit/facility and agency-wide component

Regularly scheduled check-ins and coaching with each staff monthly

Staff ideas and input are heard, valued, and encouraged

Youth perspectives and concerns are taken seriously, youth voice is valued

Welcoming process is clear and defined to welcome and orient new youth, staff, and visitors

Staff coach, teach and mentor each other.

Family engagement is encouraged through activities, events, and MDT's.

Youth are encouraged, and have opportunities, to lead and mentor each other

Building Community

What it looks like:



Low incidents on unit



Fewer grievances and PSO complaints



Staff and youth report a sense of connectedness, belonging, and support on their living unit and larger community



All individuals feel welcome on the unit



Youth leadership and peer mentorship is present



Families attend MDT's



Families feel included in youth treatment, development and informed of progress on behaviors and concerns



Youth and staff are polite, respectful, and welcoming



Youth are included in developing their treatment service plan



Increase in staff engagement with youth families

Safe Community Skill Development

5

Practice

Actions

PHD Focus:

All levels - Skills to perpetuate the PHD culture

Developmental Principle:

Learning and doing



Why?

This practice is vital to creating a PHD environment. A healthy culture can only exist when we have the skills to regulate emotions, address conflicts and problem-solve. By equipping and empowering our staff and youth with these skills, we believe our environments will become physically, psychologically and emotionally safe and will maximize the opportunity for learning.

Staff model and facilitate safe community skill groups that focus on:

- emotional regulation
- problem solving
- conflict resolution

Staff support youth engagement in treatment groups

Unit Leadership Team actively trains and coordinates training for staff

Safe Community skills are integrated into daily activities

Unsafe behavior related to mentality and culture is promptly addressed E.g. Gang culture, bullying, strong-arming and intimidation

Youth are included as peer leaders in skill groups

Safe Community Skill Development

What it looks like:



Youth and staff demonstrate skills of emotional regulation, problem solving, and conflict resolution



Staff report feeling confident in identifying skills needed and how to coach or teach safe community skills



Skill groups are documented in attendance tracking



Conflicts are addressed and resolved promptly



Conflict and violence are low



Room time use is low



Youth know their goals and demonstrate forward thinking

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