PROGRAM GUIDE
Promising Programs and Services

Successfully Transitioning Youth from the Criminal Justice Program Back into Homes and Community

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PROGRAM GUIDE

The Family Integrated Transition Project (FIT)

Program Overview:
The Family Integrated Transition Project (FIT) provides combined individual and family services to juvenile offenders transitioning from institutional facilities back into the community. The overall objective of the FIT program is to reduce anti-social behavior, encourage youth to stay away from drugs and alcohol, reduce recidivism, and provide the family with community-based support. The FIT program is designed correspondingly to three programs: Comprehensive Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET). Similarly, to the MST Initiative, the FIT program encourages community-based treatment through collaboration with schools, parole, and other agencies and services. The FIT program also addressed individual attribute which engages delinquents in treatment, and motivated their commitment to change.

The FIT program starts in the delinquents final 2 months in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) institution and continues under parole custody for 4 to 6 months. The FIT program utilizes therapists who work with 4 to 6 families. JRA is responsible for initially selecting the eligible youth (who must be under the age of 17) to work with FIT therapists.

Program Evaluation:
The overall outcome of the FIT program found that there was a significant decline in felony recidivism rates. At the 18 month post-release, statistics shoes that feline recidivism was 34 percent less for youth who went through the FIT program than for those who did not. However, results indicate that there was no significant effect on the total recidivism rate (including felony and misdemeanor), though the results indicate promising direction in reducing the rate. The FIT program is also proven to be cost-effective, demonstrating that for every $1.00 spent on the FIT program, $3.15 is saved by the criminal justice expenses.

Reference:

The Family Integrated Transition Project (FIT)

**Rated:** Effective

**Program Type:** Re-Entry

**Gender:** Both

**Age:** 10-17

**Demographic Population:** Suburban

**Status:** Currently in operation
Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Program Overview:
The Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a multimodal psychoeducational intervention designed to change the behavior of chronically aggressive adolescents and young children. The purpose of ART is to enhance social skills competence, anger control, and moral reasoning. The program integrates three distinct interventions: skill-streaming, anger-control training, and training in moral reasoning. Skill-streaming utilizes modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and transfer training to teach pro-social skills. In anger-control training, involved youths must bring to each session one or more descriptions of recent anger-arousing experiences, and over the extent of the program they are trained in how to respond to their anger experiences. Training in moral reasoning is intended to improve youths’ sense of fairness and justice regarding the needs and rights of others and to educate youths to imagine the perception of others when they face a variety of moral problem situations.

The program runs is designed to run for 10-weeks, with 3 (one hour) sessions per week for a total of 30 intervention session hours intended for anywhere between 8 to 12 juvenile delinquent participants. During the hourly sessions, participating youths typically receive information and training in each of the following areas: skill-streaming, anger-control training, and training in moral reasoning. The program utilizes repetitive a pedagogy of repetitive instruction in order to teach participants how to effectively control impulsiveness, anger and generally use more suitable behaviors. In addition, supervised group discussion is employed to change antisocial thinking.

Program Evaluation:
The results from the first two studies indicate that the ART program is an effective intervention for incarcerated juvenile delinquents. It improves pro-social skill competency and overt pro-social behavior, reduced the level of rated impulsiveness, and in one of the two samples studied it decreased the frequency and intensity of misbehaviors and enhanced the participants’ levels of moral reasoning. The Washington State study found that when ART is delivered competently, the program reduces felony recidivism and is cost effective.

Reference:
Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Program
Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Rated: Effective

Program Type: Re-Entry

Gender: Both

Age: 12-17

Demographic Population: suburban, rural, urban, tribal (Native Americans)

Status: Currently in operation
Academic Tutoring and Social Skills Training

Program Overview:
Academic Tutoring and Social Skills Training program is a social competence and academic achievement intervention for grade school children who are socially rejected and have serious academic problems in reading or mathematics. The program is based on the social skills training measures of Gary Ladd and the skills-oriented academic learning model of Michael and Lise Wallach. The social skills training element consists of a trainer working with a child once a week for 6 weeks. The core objective involves partnering a target child in play with another child from the classroom and educating the target child in suitable behaviors before and after these play periods. The academic skills training factor entails having the student meet with tutors for individual 45-minute sessions, twice a week. The central component of the academic skills training involves a comprehensive and modified method of educating by building cumulatively on secondary skills that the child has already mastered. The purpose of the behavioral procedure was used to help the child develop a sense of efficacy and self-confidence.

Program Evaluation:
Findings demonstrate that students in the Academic Tutoring and Social Skills Training program had significant improvement in reading, math, and social preference scores. Significant increases were made in reading understanding, mathematics application, and mathematics calculation, with slightly considerable effects for reading vocabulary. Though the social skills training element adopted for this program had revealed efficacy with other populations of children, in a study conducted on the Academic Tutoring and Social Skills Training program, it was most effective at promoting positive change on achievement and social preference scores.

Reference:
Academic Tutoring and Social Skills Training

**Rated:** Effective

**Program Type:** Prevention

**Gender:** Both

**Age:** 9-10

**Demographic Population:** unknown

**Status:** Currently in operation
Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)

Program Overview:
The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) centered in New York City, developed a program to aid youth leaving custody to overcome barriers faced by youth transitioning from institutional to community environments. The program was initiated by a group of youth returning from juvenile facilities who acknowledged the various academic and political difficulties facing youth re-entering their homes and communities. CASES introduced the Committee on Court-Involved Students, and the Committee’s work resulted in the creation of two units - the School Connection Center and the Community Prep High School.

The School Connection Center is a high school admissions office whose employees work together to ensure that educational re-entry initiatives are met for youth transitioning back from juvenile facilities. The services that are provided by The School Connection Center are as follow: educational assessment, transfer of academic records, and expedited enrolment in community schools.

Community Prep High School is a transitional school that aids youth who are not ready to reenter community school upon release from custody. The program services include:

- Dual curriculums to build students’ academic and social skills;
- Rolling admissions for students released by the justice system throughout the year;
- Student government and other leadership opportunities;
- Family involvement;
- Girls-only advisory and extracurricular activities;
- Individual counselling and case management services

Program Evaluation:
The Community Prep High School initiative showed higher results of overall student attendance.

Status: Currently in operation.

Reference:
Career Beginnings

Program Overview:
Career Beginnings was created to improve the life choices of underprivileged, urban high school students. The program incorporates school, community, and university relationships that present a all-inclusive package for juniors and seniors with college potential who, because of their average grades or economically educationally underprivileged family experiences, would be otherwise unlikely to pursue a college/university career. Though the program is directed at disadvantaged students, it focuses on those who display commitment and motivation. Career Beginnings offers services to assist students through the college admissions process or through the process of finding full-time employment. Some of the services offered include tutoring, help with college or financial aid applications, job information, and career fairs. Another element of the program consists of providing mentors who support students in searching college and career choices through educational sessions, career-specific training, and high-quality summer work internships.

Program Evaluation:
The Career Beginnings study found numerous positive results. High school attendance was slightly higher for participants than for other individuals. Participants reported having higher occupational ambition. The program succeeded in increasing participants’ college attendance in the year immediately following graduation. Across seven diverse settings, the percentage of participants who enrolled in a 2 or 4 year college program rose 5 percent over nonparticipants.

Reference:
Career Beginnings

**Rated:** Effective

**Program Type:** Prevention

**Gender:** Both

**Age:** 16-18

**Demographic Population:** Urban

**Status:** Currently in operation
Job Corps

Program Overview:
Job Corps is one of the largest and most comprehensive residential, education, and job training program. To participate in Job Corps, students must meet the following requirements: be 16 through 24, be a U.S. citizen or legal resident, meet income requirements, and be ready, willing, and able to participate fully in an educational environment.
Job Corps presents a complete array of career development services to youths to prepare them for successful careers. Job Corps utilizes a holistic career development training approach that incorporates the teaching of academic, vocational, employability skills and social competencies through a combination of classroom, practical and learning-based experiences to prepare youth for stable, long-term, high-paying jobs. The Job Corps design is founded on the philosophy of quality services and individualized education to meet the requirements of each student. Training approaches and methods of performance vary to allow modification of service components and delivery methods, make effective use of resources, and meet individual student and employer needs.
Job Corps services are provided in three phases: outreach and admissions, center operations, and placement. The outreach and admissions trainers are responsible for identifying, assisting, and approving the applications of those individuals interested in joining the program. Center operations include the program’s core services of academic education, vocational training, residential living, and health care along with a wide range of other services, such as counseling, social skills training, health education, and recreation. While enrollment in this phase of the program does not have a fixed duration, participants are typically involved for 8 months.

Program Evaluation:
Job Corps significantly increased the education and training that program participants received. Job Corps led to substantial increases in the receipt of GED and vocational certificates, but it led to slight reductions in the attainment of a high school diploma. Job Corps had no effect on college attendance and completion, Job Corps generated positive impacts on earnings and employment, and Job Corps generated positive impacts on welfare and crime.

Reference:

Job Corps

Rated: Effective

Program Type: Prevention

Gender: Both

Age: 16-24

Demographic Population: Urban

Status: Currently in operation
Supporting Adolescents with Guidance and Employment (SAGE)

Program Overview:
Supporting Adolescents with Guidance and Employment (SAGE) is a violence-prevention program aimed specifically for African-American adolescents. The program entails three main components, namely a Rites of Passages (ROP) program, a summer jobs training and placement (JTP) program, and an entrepreneurial experience that uses the Junior Achievement (JA) model. The objective of the first component, ROP, is to develop a strong sense of African-American cultural pride and ethnic identity in the participants and encourage a sense of responsibility in their community, their peers, and themselves. In seminars held every other week over 8 months, the program also endorses self-esteem, positive attitudes, and the avoidance from inappropriate behaviors. The second component, the JTP experience, places youths in summer jobs at desirable work locations such as dentist offices, local museums, and recreational centers. Site supervisors are expected to present structure. Youths are trained in appropriate business behavior and dress. Job counsellors work with the youths to resolve issues such as transportation. The third component, JA, teaches how to develop and implement a small business. With the guidance of volunteer advisers from the local business community, youths form a legal corporation, develop a business plan, elect officers, and sell stock to family and friends. The overall objective of SAGE is based on the theory that positive advantages in personal and social responsibility, educational aspirations, and academic achievement, in compliance with employment training and opportunities fostered by community supporters will make a positive impact on reducing violence among the participants.

Program Evaluation:
At the 18-month follow-up, the problem behaviors reported by the employment-with-guidance group declined, in contrast to the slight increase of the comparison group and to no change in the employment-only group. Examining each behavioral outcome individually, differences in a positive direction for employment-with-guidance were observed for 8 of the 10 outcomes. For the employment-only group, positive differences were observed for 7 of the 10 outcome measures. Of the 10 behavioral outcomes examined, the program seemed to have the greatest benefits for reducing reports for carrying a gun, selling illegal drugs, and injuring others with a weapon. However, programmatic gains were not sustained over the 30-month follow-up.

Reference:
Supporting Adolescents with Guidance and employment (SAGE)

Rated: Promising

Program Type: Prevention

Gender: Male

Age: 12-16

Demographic Population: Urban (African American)

Status: Currently in operation
Comprehensive Multisystemic Therapy (MST) Initiative

Program Overview:
The county probation department collaborates with individual MST provider, Liberty Resources Inc., to offer MST support to youth at four stages of juvenile justice system involvement: probation intake, detention, family court, and as a re-entry strategy for youth returning to the county from juvenile correctional institutions. At intake, a probation officer meets with a youth and their family. If the probation officer determines that the youth is at risk for out of home placement, they can divert the youth directly to the MST provider. Both status offenders and delinquents can be diverted. If the family agrees to participate in the program, they sign a release and MST services are provided for an average of 120 days. If the youth successfully completes the MST program, probation can close the case with no formal intervention from the court.

Once a youth is identified, they are diverted out of detention and referred to the MST program, with Family Court approval. MST provides a treatment summary to the court. If the youth and their family agree to participate in the program, services are initiated. If a youth successfully completes the terms of the program, the case can be closed with no further juvenile justice system involvement. In some instances, after detention, a child remains on, or is placed on, probation. In others, the case is diverted from probation, the youth is given an ACD, and further juvenile justice system involvement is prevented. The program is always seeking to prevent “the next step” in the justice system, but depending on where the child is in the system, this can mean different things.

New York State OCFS contracts with Liberty Resources, Inc., to provide MST as a re-entry strategy for youth who are returning to the community after having been placed in one of the state’s juvenile residential facilities. The MST provider receives the names of youth who are returning to the community two weeks in advance of their release, and immediately engages in outreach with the youth’s family to prepare for the youth’s return home and the beginning of MST treatment. Youth participate in the MST program as part of a comprehensive aftercare strategy to provide the youth and family with services and supports necessary to maintain the youth in the community.

Program Evaluation:
MST treatment causes a reduction in incarceration and placement days. MST is also effective in reducing maltreatment by parents and in improving family functioning

Status: Currently in operation

Reference:
Multisystemic Therapy Onondaga. Liberty Resources Inc.
Retrieved from [http://www.liberty-resources.org/programs/showProgram.cfm?program=7](http://www.liberty-resources.org/programs/showProgram.cfm?program=7)
Operation New Home

Program Overview:
Operation New Home is a curriculum-based parole reentry program devised to assist high-risk offenders post-release by supporting and helping them with reentry barriers. This program was formerly known as LifeSkills ‘95, and employs that same six components proposed to help successful reintegration.

1. Improve the basic socialization skills necessary for successful reintegration into the community.
2. Significantly reduce criminal activity in terms of amount and seriousness.
3. Alleviate the need for or dependence on alcohol or illicit drugs.
4. Improve overall lifestyle choices.
5. Reduce the individual’s need for gang participation and affiliation as a support mechanism.
6. Reduce the high rate of short-term parole revocations.

Program Evaluation:
Ninety days after release from institutional facility, youths who participated in the Operation New Home were less likely to be rearrested, were employed and maintained a job, they had a better attitude toward working, and were less likely abuse drugs or alcohol. Participants were also less likely to associate with former gang members, to have “serious problems” with family relationships, to be responsive and positive in their commitments to parole, and to associate almost exclusively with positive and favorable peer groups.

Reference:
Operation New Home

Rated: Effective
Program Type: Re-Entry
Gender: Both
Age: 12-25
Demographic Population: Rural, Suburban, and Urban
Status: Currently in operation
The VisionQuest Program

Program Overview:

VisionQuest is a wilderness challenge program that provides serious juvenile offenders with an opportunity of substituting imprisonment with this program. It provides them with an educational scheme that progresses throughout the program with constant monitoring and reassessment. Most of the participants in the VisionQuest program were referrals from the juvenile court. All eligible candidates must go through an interview process and meet the required credentials of commitment. Youth spend about 12 to 15 months doing extensive outdoor challenges that are separated into various periods:

- 3 months in an orientation wilderness camp
- 5 months in an adventure program
- 5 months in a community residential program.

During the first period, youth are expected to work with the wilderness camps and live in tepees with 6 to 10 other youths and one counselor. In the second period, youth are involved in the adventure program (wagon train) where they feed animals and set up nightly camps. In the final period, youth enter a residential program where they focus on family and educational aspects.

Program Evaluation:
Findings from the program indicate that the program has significantly reduced the likelihood of re-arrest. Those youth who did not go through the program were 71 percent more likely to re-offend, while those who did were 51 percent.

Reference:

Rated: Effective

Program Type: Re-Entry

Gender: Male

Age: 11-18

Demographic Population: unknown

Status: Currently in operation