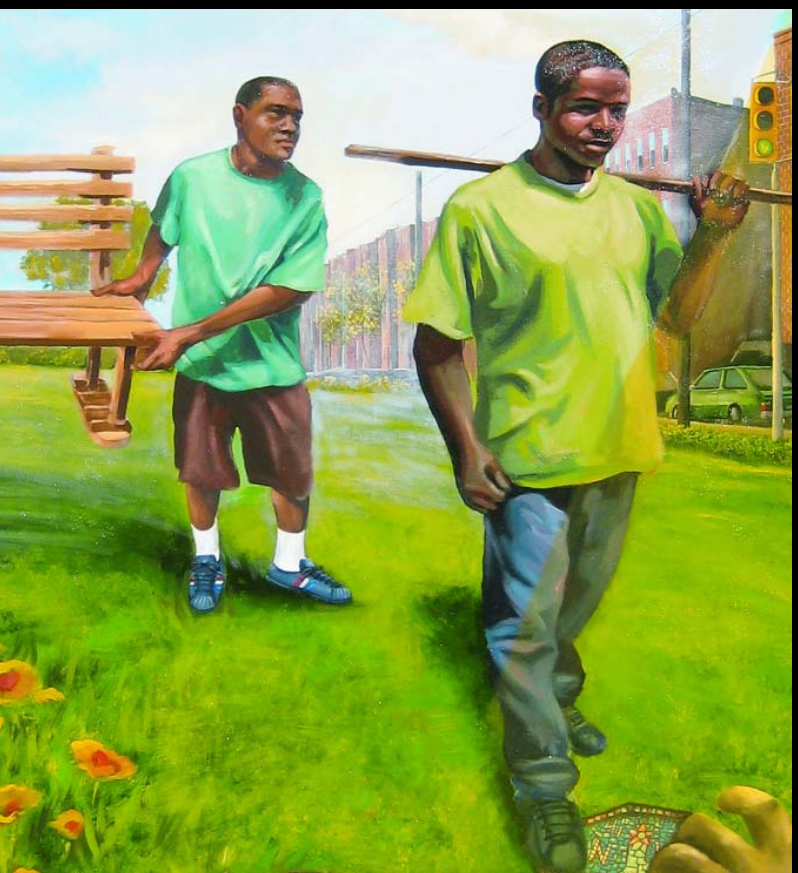
Building Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Aftercare Model

Probation Case Management Essentials for Youth in Placement



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But the hard work of turning policy goals into changes in aftercare practice has fallen to practitioners. This paper could not have been written if it were not for the very talented and committed individuals assembled under the banner of the "All-Sites Group"—primarily probation administrators and officers from counties in the first round of PCCD- and Models for Change-supported pilot demonstrations. They spent many hours critically examining probation's key role in managing the smooth, structured reintegration of delinquent youth in placement. I am deeply grateful for their input, without which this paper would have been no more than an academic exercise.

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Building Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Aftercare Model

Introduction

Traditionally, the term "aftercare" described the post-release period of supervision following discharge from placement. By most accounts, not much aftercare planning or preparation occurred before a juvenile's release back into the community. At the same time, neither the facility's treatment regimen nor its education or vocational programming were linked to post-release considerations. All that and more is changing. Pennsylvania is engaged in a full-scale reform initiative to improve its system of aftercare supervision, services and supports by beginning "aftercare" earlier than ever imagined—at the beginning, when placement is being considered. This paper describes the development of a structured and thoughtful approach for implementing the probation-related goals of the Joint Policy Statement, resulting in a model for comprehensive aftercare operating in county juvenile probation departments and in collaboration with public juvenile corrections institutions, private residential facilities and host and home school districts, in particular.

Aftercare reform focuses on a challenging group of juvenile offenders—those at the deep end of the system. It is envisioned that better probation practices, better collaboration and integrated planning between probation and its placement and school district partners, enhanced community supervision strategies, and better utilization of community resources will lead to better outcomes for youth and more effective use of limited placement dollars.

Background

In setting the stage for development of a comprehensive model for Pennsylvania, the Joint Policy Statement on Aftercare for Delinquent Youth (JPS) defines the scope of aftercare as "… the combination of services, planning, support and supervision that begins at disposition, continues while a youth is in placement, anticipates the youth's release from placement, continues until the youth is discharged from juvenile court supervision, and extends thereafter through connections to other opportunities, supports or services, such as those provided to dependent children."

Juvenile courts and probation departments have primary responsibility for achieving the juvenile justice system's goals and ensuring that rehabilitation and treatment services and aftercare supervision encourage life success. The Juvenile Act mandates "…balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community" and state and local juvenile justice practitioners continue efforts to define these goals and identify activities calculated to achieve them.[1]

Unlike most states, juvenile courts and probation departments in Pennsylvania have responsibility for young offenders from the time they enter the county's juvenile justice system until their cases are closed from juvenile court jurisdiction. Juvenile court judges have the authority to order placement in a specific program/facility, set the anticipated length of stay, and determine the timing of release.

Probation is responsible for conducting pre-disposition investigations, making recommendations for placement, carrying out the court's dispositional orders, and providing supervision before, during and after placement.

One of juvenile probation's primary activities is to develop and manage a course of action that has the greatest likelihood of achieving the juvenile justice system's objectives—helping youth to leave the system more capable of leading law-abiding, productive and connected lives, having taken action to repair the harm to their victims. Ultimately, juvenile probation officers are responsible for coordinating planning among all parties: placement, schools, behavioral health, C & Y, and other community-based providers, since each party may have a responsibility for supporting the youth in accomplishing probation's plan.

More than half of the Joint Policy Statement's 17 aspirational goals have direct implications for probation, in essence requiring such things as:

- Individualized assessment of a youth's risks, needs and capacities (bullets 1 and 13)
- Consideration of crime victims' views (bullet 10)
- Collaboration with the facility and host and home school districts on the development and refinement of a "single plan" that guides placement and aftercare supervision (bullets 2, 3, and 16)
- Inclusion of activities in the plan related to each of the juvenile justice system's goals—accountability, competency development, and community protection (bullets 5, 11, and 13)
- Furthering the principles set forth in JCJC's Aftercare Standards (bullet 7)
- Oversight to ensure that what happens in placement is linked to the plan for aftercare (bullet 4)
- Obligation to monitor performance (bullet 12)
- Skills to fulfill their roles as planners and monitors (bullet 12)
- Use of evidence-based practices, such as some of the "Blueprints" programs, as post-discharge services (bullet 17).

Turning Aspirations into Policy and Practice

Turning the statewide Joint Policy Statement into changes in local policy and practice is advancing on two levels: at the state policy level by an Aftercare Steering Committee[2] and its Court, Children & Youth, Education, and Probation Work Groups and at the local practice level by the "All-sites" group comprised of the five first-round pilot county probation departments;[3] the Aftercare Specialists from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC), Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (Chiefs' Council), and the Department of Public Welfare (DPW); Juvenile Law Center (JLC); Education Law Center; the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD); and the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ). Other local-level advancements include the work of the JCJC and Chiefs' Council Aftercare Specialists who are spreading the word about reform efforts via statewide aftercare forums, a 2006 assessment of probation practices in every county, and support to a second and third wave of pilot county probation departments that have signed on to examine and enhance their practices.

This "top-down / bottom-up" strategy is producing results. Chief among them is the refinement of an approach for good aftercare planning, support and supervision into a model for comprehensive aftercare that benefits from research and demonstrations in other places but is specifically tailored to Pennsylvania.

Starting Points

The "All-sites" group began by focusing its attention on the two goal statements calling for early, collaborative, and ongoing planning vis-à-vis a "single plan" (bullets 2 and 3):

- "Juvenile probation officers and residential treatment staff collaborate on a single plan, developed within 30 days of placement that integrates treatment and aftercare services, including appropriate education placements and goals developed in consultation with the appropriate school district."

- "Juvenile probation officers, in cooperation with residential treatment staff, host school district representatives and resident school district representatives, refine the plan as youths move closer to leaving the facility to include post-release provisions that establish the services to be provided and planned conditions of supervision."

The starting point for discussion about the "single plan" idea was the group's perceptions about current practice and comments from individuals (primarily chiefs) interviewed for the 2006 statewide assessment of aftercare practice.[4]

Currently, the "single plan" idea is most closely represented by the development of the facility's Individualized Service Plan (ISP) or Master Case Plan (MCP). Typically there is no "real document," other than the court order, that guides PO / offender activities or sets out court/probation expectations for placement and post-release expectations.
Based on DPW's regulations governing out of home placements, the ISP must:

- Be completed within 30 days of placement
- Involve input from a variety of sources, including the PO as a contracting agency representative
- Be developed on the basis of a meeting to review the plan, with participation documented through signature and dating of the plan by those present or involved
- Contain "a discharge or transfer plan" and address "how the child's educational needs will be met."

The majority of counties reported that the ISP does not significantly involve aftercare planning and is usually limited to identifying the person to whom the youth will return upon discharge and occasionally the home school. In practice, the ISP has been driven by the agency's program rather than the youth's specific aftercare goals.

From probation's perspective, the ISP/MCP may represent merely the fulfillment of a paper requirement (plan filed and never consulted again) rather than a "working" document. It is entirely likely that providers would say that they do take the ISP seriously but find they cannot enforce the conditions of the ISP without the full participation of probation. In either case, instead of seeing themselves as bill-paying consumers of placement services who should be driving the crucial planning process, probation has often taken a back seat.

At the May 23, 2006 "All-sites" meeting, the chair of the Probation Work Group laid out the vision and strategy for a "single plan" that is aligned with the intent of the Joint Policy Statement and places ownership for it squarely on probation:

Vision: integrated planning that guides and ensures continuity of case management of juveniles in placement and on aftercare supervision.

Strategy: A "single plan" that is probation-driven and outlines court/probation expectations for placement and reentry/aftercare. Any other plan (ISP, MCP) must reflect the vision outlined in probation's plan.

What does that mean for probation departments? What would a "single plan" look like in practice? Foremost, it means that probation departments will be driving the case management process… rightfully so. It means that probation officers will be responsible for developing a plan for every youth in placement based on expectations of where the youth will need to be when he is discharged. It means that probation officers will need to collaborate with provider and school district partners who can support the youth in accomplishing probation's plan. Clearly, this goes well beyond the traditional "aftercare plan," typically completed towards the end of the placement experience, if it is done at all.

Based upon this directive, the "All-sites" group recognized that its focus needed to be expanded. The single plan could not be considered in isolation to other probation case management components. The Joint Policy Statement referenced risk and needs assessment, oversight and monitoring, and linkages with community resources. The group considered these and other case management components in context with the single plan.

From there, discussions revolved around some key questions. Chief among them: When does aftercare begin and what's the point? According to the Joint Policy Statement, the overarching objective of good aftercare planning is to link placement decisions and placement interventions to post-release expectations. The idea—to get courts and probation to consider placement in light of what happens upon return—raises some fundamental questions. Why do we place delinquent youth? Why do we remove them from the community? The reasons for removing offenders from the community will affect expectations for what is to be accomplished in placement and what happens after release.

After hours of deliberation over several meetings, at its August 2007 meeting, the "All-sites" group was reasonably satisfied that it had reached consensus on some specific recommendations regarding good probation practices and some strategies for integrated and collaborative planning between probation and providers and schools aimed at achieving the desired objective—smooth, structured transitions. In essence the approach hinges on "front-loading" the process by paying attention early on to what is anticipated at the back-end and doing so in a standardized, structured manner that's directed toward clear juvenile justice system goals, guided by explicit criteria and based on pertinent information. It also hinges on the availability and utilization of community resources as transitional components or longer-term resources that can support post-placement youth.

The chart on the following page summarizes the five phases of the model in relation to probation case management tasks.

5 Phases of Pennsylvania's Model for Comprehensive Aftercare and Corresponding Probation Activities			
Phase	**Timing**	**Purposes**	**Probation Activites**
Pre-Placement	During pre-disposition investigation	Informed decision-making re: disposition recommendation and facility/placement recommendation	Conduct standardized risk and needs assessment, identify priority needs and level of risk, apply guidelines to selection of available placement options Prepare report / recommendation and share w/ judge and attorneys
Placement	At disposition and throughout duration of placement	Linking placement to post-release expectations and ensuring that "treatment" addresses JJ goals and prepares youth for life after confinement Working w/ youth and parents on activities related to probation's plan	Prepare referral packet Develop "single plan" Communicate "single plan" to facility Attend ISP meeting Visit facility to monitor juvenile's progress and oversee delivery of placement services Prepare for placement review hearings Engage parents
Pre-Release Transition	30 – 60 days prior to release from placement	Structured, well-planned, coordinated transition Preparation for progressively increased responsibility and freedom	Reassess risk and needs in conjunction with placement staff Facilitate youth / community interaction / involvement Arrange school / work assignments, services and supports Determine level of control/supervision required to manage risk Revise single plan for reintegration and aftercare phases
Release & Reintregration	First 30 days after release from placement	Immediate engagement in productive activity, services & supports Appropriate supervision, structure, and control to protect community	Facilitate immediate engagement in school or work, necessary services, and opportunities to practice skills and bond with pro-social adults Enforce compliance to structured activities/controls designed to manage risk Support stable living arrangement
Aftercare Supervision	Remainder of time on aftercare supervision	Direct activities and supervision toward productive, connected and law-abiding outcomes	Encourage ongoing education / career training Monitor juvenile's progress on plan activities Enforce compliance Support parents Decrease supervision/controls Document intermediate outcomes at case closing

Probation Case Management Essentials

While the "single plan" is the tool—a written document or road map for probation's supervision—case management is the process by which probation officers:

- Assess an offender's risks, needs and strengths
- Plan activities
- Facilitate offender participation and completion of planned activities
- Monitor offender performance and enforce compliance to the court order
- Broker / link to community resources and services.

It's the sum of all activities the officer engages in to assist the youth toward behavior change and accountability.

POs perform these case management tasks to differing degrees for as long as the case remains open. The decisions or recommendations that emanate from them guide placement, reentry and aftercare supervision activities that are directed toward achieving juvenile justice goals (community protection, offender accountability, and competency development) and outcomes (law-abiding, productive and connected citizens). Research has documented a link between these good probation practices, a juvenile's use of services and completion of planned activities and lower rates of rearrest and higher rates of positive outcomes.[5]

Although in practice, these case management tasks may overlap, they are described in somewhat linear fashion corresponding to the five phases of aftercare. Documentation—preparing reports, maintaining good records, and recording progress along the way or intermediate outcomes at case closing—is another essential case management task that will be discussed where relevant.

Investigation and Assessment

Some measure of investigation and assessment begins as soon as the youth is referred to court and continues throughout the life of a case. Good probation practice encourages a systematic collection of relevant information that informs the decision at hand and takes into account and balances the interests of the juvenile, the victim, and the community.

Preliminary investigations should gather information needed for deciding whether the matter will be handled formally or informally. In the process, information may come to light that will merit further investigation or clinical evaluation, but these investigations (including any behavioral health screening) must strike a balance between the need for information and the rights of the accused.

Once a juvenile admits to the allegations or has been found to be delinquent, the decision is what disposition to recommend, essentially deciding whether the offender can be managed in the community or whether more structure is required to keep the community safe (phase 1). Following a placement disposition by the court, further assessment helps to define the placement objectives and probation's plan (phase 2). Prior to release from placement, a reassessment of the juvenile's risk and needs helps to plan reintegration activities (phase 3).

Pre-disposition Risk / Needs Assessments Aligned with Juvenile Justice Goals:

Although the direction and scope of investigation will vary with the nature of the case and the resources and dispositional alternatives available, all predisposition investigations should be designed to shed light on an offender's risks, needs and strengths related to community protection, offender accountability, and competency development, and on any behavioral health or parenting/family concerns. Front-loading the process by collecting relevant information in these areas is anticipated to pay off at subsequent stages and lead to better outcomes for youth.

Community Protection:
What specific risk does the juvenile pose to person or property? What is the community's tolerance for this kind of risk? What can the probation department do to manage or minimize the risk? Is community supervision or placement required? If the offender's risk cannot be managed in the community, placement/commitment considerations begin with the level of security, control, or restriction required.

Indicators of the risk an offender may represent to community safety include facts about the current offense itself along with the juvenile's court/placement track record. Determining risk should be accomplished on the basis of a standardized assessment of "static" risk factors: current and historical events or circumstances that cannot be changed and that are empirically associated with continued delinquent behavior, such as age at first offense, severity of current offense, # of prior arrests/referrals/adjudications/placements/failures to adjust/absconding, and an early pattern of conduct problems—lying, stealing, truancy or drug use. (History of involvement with C & Y, any failures to adjust at prior dependency placements, and parental criminality or substance abuse would also be relevant here.)

Following a determination of risk, assessment should: 1) bring to light the culpability of the offender and the consequences of the offense and 2) identify the juvenile's most pressing needs related to his offending behavior, which will be the focus of placement interventions.

Accountability:
What consequences will be necessary to hold the juvenile accountable for the offense? The investigation should focus on the nature of the harm caused to the victim and community. By this stage, the offender's guilt should have already been established or admitted. The assessment should determine whether the juvenile acknowledges and understands the harm done to the crime victim and the community. Pertinent information to uncover is the attitude of the offender—his acceptance of responsibility for these matters, his awareness and understanding of the consequences of his actions, his remorse, and his willingness to make amends.

Competency Development:
What factors and circumstances contributed to the juvenile's offending? What measures will enable the juvenile to exit the system more capable of law-abiding, productive citizenship than when he entered? In Pennsylvania, five competency development domains have been identified as the areas that matter most for success in school, work and life. Strengths in these areas increase resistance to delinquency and deficits in them put adolescents at risk for continued involvement in the system.

Typically assessments are aimed at uncovering a youth's "criminogenic" needs (e.g., "dynamic" risk factors) or those circumstances or conditions that can potentially be changed and which are

empirically linked to delinquency (see "Risk and Protective Factors" sidebar).

Behavioral Health and Family Issues: Investigations also uncover the family's capacity to control, supervise and support their child and flag potential mental illness, sexual violence, or substance abuse issues. Identifying these behavioral health issues often requires an additional battery of screening and more clinical assessment or evaluation to determine whether treatment may be necessary.

Why Place?

Predisposition investigations help juvenile courts determine what measures will be "right" for individual offenders in accordance with the Juvenile Act's balanced attention mandate. In general, however, most juvenile offenders should not be "sent away." Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system operates under the principle of least restrictive setting required to protect the community, which is tied to a long-standing policy of keeping juvenile offenders in their communities whenever possible. Even from a pure public safety standpoint, and without regard to costs, all but a small proportion of serious juvenile offenders are better handled in the community—where they will have an opportunity to learn and practice pro-social ways of living—than in closed institutions.

In recommending placement, risk trumps need—lower risk offenders, even those with many needs, should not be placed, if for no other reason than to guard against the "contagion" effect of putting them in group settings with higher-risk offenders or disrupting their "prosocial stakes." The needs of lower-risk offenders should be met in the community under probation supervision, if required.

Risk classification—which is used to assign youth to low, medium, or high-risk groups that have different levels of contact or service standards—is made on the basis of a lot of (the right) information compiled as a result of a structured assessment of static and dynamic risk factors. To assist POs in this task, departments should have: 1) a standardized set of questions to be answered / circumstances to be considered to ensure that all POs are assessing through the same lens across all relevant delinquency-related domains, 2) a clearly articulated method for using all of the information collected to determine levels of risk and need, 3) a list of the range of local dispositional alternatives and residential facilities and what they have to offer in the way of programming, services and supports, and 4) guidelines for choosing among the options.

An assessment protocol gives structure and consistency to decision making without eliminating professional discretion or judgment. It is designed to improve the quality of decisions and lend equity to the process by: 1) uniformly and consistently gathering specific, relevant information pertinent to the task and 2) organizing, considering and interpreting it in a logical manner within the structure provided by law and juvenile justice system goals.

Written guidelines provide an objective, consistent framework for making disposition recommendations that reflect state and local policies and goals. They should describe the available dispositional / placement alternatives and articulate explicit criteria for deciding among them. Guidelines should preserve a measure of officer discretion with supervisor approval in each instance.

Along with standardized risk and needs assessments and training in how to use the information, well-designed, thorough, flexible departmental guidelines for making disposition recommendations can assure the court that disposition recommendations reflect systematic attention to each of the system's primary

Risk and Protective Factors

Research has uncovered an array of risk and potential protective factors associated with an individual youth's offending behavior. Risk factors are circumstances or events that increase the likelihood that a youth will continue delinquent activities. Protective factors are those things that decrease the likelihood that a youth will continue offending behavior or moderate the impact of risk factors. Both risk and protective factors can be static or dynamic. Static factors are current and historic events or circumstances that cannot be changed (for example, age at first arrest, temperament) that are associated with delinquency. Dynamic factors are circumstances or conditions that are highly correlated with delinquency that can potentially be changed. A listing of common dynamic risk factors—also known as "criminogenic needs"—includes:

- **Competency development domains:**
  - Prosocial (poor social interaction, impulse control and problem solving skills)
  - Moral reasoning (antisocial thinking, attitudes, values and beliefs)
  - Academic (poor study skills, poor school performance and behavior, attendance problems)
  - Workforce development (for older youth: poor work history, lack of work readiness / career development skills)
  - Independent living (for older youth: lack of daily living skills)
- **Peer associations**
  - Negative peers, lack of prosocial peers
- **Violent, aggressive or assaultive behavior**
- **Recent substance use**
- **Family functioning / parenting attributes**
  - Poor parent / child relationship
  - Poor parental control and supervision

A listing of common protective factors (or strengths) includes:

- Good parental supervision
- Strong family ties
- Having a good relationship with a positive adult role model (teacher, mentor, coach)
- Strong community ties
- Engagement in school and activities
- Realistic career goals
- Employment skills
- Living skills

Research indicates that reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors can decrease recidivism and lead to positive outcomes for youth. We know that most delinquents outgrow their offending behaviors because they get a job, develop close, caring personal relationships, and form attachments and bonds to pro-social groups and institutions. Those at higher risk need opportunities to acquire and apply skills and address issues that got them into trouble in the first place. Probation is responsible for ensuring that each case will be assessed across all of the relevant domains and for determining the most critical or pressing "criminogenic needs" that are directly related to the youth's offending behavior and most amenable to change.

goals and that factors relevant to those goals have been duly considered in each case.

*See sample Competency Development Needs and Strengths Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Placement Guidelines.**

Disposition Recommendation / Referral Packet

A PO uses the information gathered during predisposition investigation and assessment to prepare a report for the court's consideration during the disposition hearing. Many departments have a format for summarizing relevant information for the court. A recommendation for placement should include the rationale that supports that recommendation and POs should be responsible for making the case on paper and in person—that the placement recommendation is driven by the risk the youth poses to community safety and that the factors leading to the selection of a particular facility are based upon departmental guidelines and supervisor approval.

Summarizing and sharing this information with providers would assist them in determining their ability to meet the needs of referred youth (e.g., acceptance decision) and help them develop their treatment plan once a youth has been accepted and placed.

Collaborative planning begins with the transmittal of the referral packet. The PO should make every effort to include as many of the following items as possible in the referral packet:

1. Community Protection: risk assessment summary of current offense, prior court history, and delinquency and dependency placement history; level of security/ restriction requested
2. Competency Development: delinquency-related needs assessment summary highlighting those needs most closely associated with a youth's offending behavior
3. Offender Accountability: summary of offender's attitude toward crime victim, acceptance of responsibility for causing harm and willingness to take action to repair harm
4. Victim Impact Statement, including any concerns regarding home passes and notification requests
5. Family background and parental issues summary
6. Behavioral Health: Psychological / psychiatric evaluations or other clinical assessments for mental illness, substance abuse, violence, or sexual aggression
7. Medical, physical health or any other special needs / issues; immunization record
8. Education records / transcripts; home school district contact information
9. Court order
10. List of anticipated services the facility may be expected to provide to address the juvenile's needs
11. Post-release expectations (see chart)
12. Whenever possible, a copy of the "single plan."

* Please note that references throughout this document to "see samples" refer to a set of templates, forms, and protocols which are provided separately to allow for ease of use and updating.

Post-Release Expectations		
Youth's Planned Living Arrangement	☐ Return Home ☐ Relative ☐ Legal Guardian ☐ Permanent Foster Care ☐ Independent Living	The Referral Packet will include a summary of the assessment of the family background, any parental issues to be addressed and the home situation to which the youth is likely to return. The JPO will communicate the realities of the neighborhood to which the juvenile will return, including community risks and resources.
Education	☐ Re-enroll in Home School District ☐ Enter IU / Alternative School ☐ Enroll in GED¨ ☐ Enroll in College ☐ Other:	The Referral Packet will include a summary of the assessment of the youth's needs and strengths regarding academic performance, attendance, and conduct and a complete transcript. The JPO will communicate expectations of the home school district for the youth's re-enrollment.
Employment	☐ Enter Vocational Training Program ☐ Enroll in an Apprenticeship Program ☐ Become Employed ☐ NA (reason)	The Referral Packet will include a summary of the assessment of the youth's work history and employment and career planning skills The JPO will communicate career training and employment opportunities in the home community.

Aftercare Supervision	☐ Enter Day / Evening Reporting Program
	☐ Aftercare Supervision for ___ (specify months)
	☐ No Aftercare Supervision
	  ☐ Will be 18
	  ☐ Will live out of county
	☐ C & Y Involvement (dual jurisdiction)
		The JPO will communicate the community resources that may be tapped to support the youth during aftercare supervision and the level of supervision that may be required.

Length of Stay Expectation	_____ (in months)	The JPO will communicate that the LOS is related to the severity of the offense and the risk the offender poses to the community, not necessarily to "completing" the program.

The "Single Plan" Idea

Following a decision to place (phase 2), probation is now responsible for developing and managing a course of action that has the greatest likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes of law-abiding, productive, and connected citizens who have made amends. The PO considers the converging interests of the community at large, the victim, the juvenile offender, and the family in developing that course of action, which is embodied in the probation / single plan.

Initially the plan directs activities to be completed during placement. But the plan is not set in stone. As a living document, the PO modifies the plan when there is a change in the youth's status (e.g., from placement to aftercare supervision), if the youth's needs change or are better understood, or as a result of a violation and hearing (e.g., from one placement to another). A good plan makes visits, meetings, and review hearings more productive since discussions will revolve around plan activities.

The essential case management task—planning—is focused on defining goal-directed objectives to be achieved, determining probation's expectations for residential placement and ensuring that activities in placement are linked to post-release expectations. Prior to release from placement, planning is focused on preparing youth for transition from confinement to "freedom," facilitating immediate engagement in school, work or job training, and preparing them for the eventual removal of external controls provided by the juvenile justice system.

Key elements of the "Single Plan":

- *Individualized* in terms of the juvenile's risks, needs, strengths, age and abilities
- *Prescriptive* in terms of community protection, competency development, accountability, behavioral health treatment and family functioning objectives to be achieved during and after placement
- *Targeted* in terms of directing the juvenile toward activities to be completed
- A *performance-based* "contract" that clearly spells out criteria for success—how progress will be measured
- *Integrated* to ensure continuity of case management from placement through aftercare
- *Shared* with service provider in a timely manner
- *Collaborative* in terms of the PO, facility, host and home school districts and the youth and family working together to ensure that placement interventions are tied to post-release expectations and that all parties are considering anticipated aftercare / reentry needs at the front end of the process.

The "Single Plan" is the tool for collaborative / integrated planning between all of the parties. However, it is also the road map for probation's supervision for as long as a youth is under juvenile court jurisdiction. As such, the plan directs the facility, offender, his parents, and the PO toward targeted activities so that key objectives are not forgotten and less essential activities are given a lower priority.

As the 2006 assessment revealed, POs typically base their supervision on the court-ordered conditions of probation. By themselves, however, the conditions do not provide the functional or practical guidance required for good case management, particularly for youth in placement. The "Single Plan" should outline: 1) meaningful objectives in relation to each goal; 2) activities to accomplish those objectives; and 3) a timeframe for completing them. As the case management tool, this comprehensive probation plan provides the impetus for the PO to facilitate the juvenile's participation, monitor

progress, and enforce compliance. More important, it helps the PO to develop a strategy for not only managing an offender's risk but also minimizing it via interventions that address the offender's most criminogenic needs.

"Single Plan" at Time of Placement

Although further assessment may be required to help define probation objectives, the plan at the time of placement should address the following issues:

Community Protection:
The level of security necessary to address the offender's immediate risk was determined by the judge's decision to order placement in a particular facility. The facility's "level" system for maintaining order and safety is the mechanism for managing that risk during placement. The plan, however, should outline objectives stipulating home visit expectations, including the schedule and activities to be accomplished, including any victim considerations. Efforts to minimize risk should be directed toward helping youth transition from external system controls to internal ones.

Offender Accountability:
The plan should outline objectives the juvenile is to achieve regarding the accountability goal. The PO should specify what activities the youth will engage in during placement that will help him understand and acknowledge the wrongfulness of his behavior and the impact of his behavior on the crime victim and community and what activities are required to repair the harm to the greatest extent possible. More than likely, the court order stipulated restitution and community service obligations. At this point, the PO needs to determine how they will be carried out. For example, what will the restitution payment/community service schedule be while the youth is in placement? What types of community service activities will the youth participate in? What is the expectation for when the youth will complete the victim awareness curriculum?

Competency Development:
The plan should outline objectives the youth is to achieve regarding the competency development goal. Here the PO prioritizes the behavior problems or skill deficits that place the juvenile at greatest risk for continued criminal activity, noting any strengths to be leveraged, and specifying activities the youth will engage in during placement and activities that can wait until reentry. Activities the youth will engage in must be age and developmentally appropriate and fit within one of the five competency development domains. However, in nearly every case, academic advancement will be a key objective while the youth is in placement necessitating collaboration with host and home school district representatives (see "Collaborating on Education and Workforce Development Components" sidebar).

Behavioral Health:
The plan should outline any behavior health (mental illness or substance abuse) treatment objectives for the youth to achieve, including any related to the PTSD treatment curricula.

Parental Services and Supports:
The plan should outline any objectives for the parents to achieve, including visitation and other contacts with their child while in placement. The PO specifies the frequency of parental visits to the facility or other contact with youth, the schedule of PO/parent contacts, and any expectations for parental involvement in (and completion of) services (family management or parenting skills, for example) to improve parental supervision and support of their child upon release. If C &Y is to provide these

services to the parents, or if it is anticipated that the youth will not be returning to his family after placement, the PO should set up a shared case management arrangement, filing the proper paperwork with the court to declare the youth dependent. Planning for an alternate or independent living arrangement upon release must begin as early as possible during placement so no one is taken by surprise and logistics are arranged.

The plan should be drafted with the input and active participation of the juvenile and his parents / guardians. The PO should engage them in discussions regarding:

- The juvenile's issues / needs and any parenting issues that will be targeted
- The overall purpose of probation's plan in terms of the goals and objectives to be achieved as a result of the juvenile justice system's intervention
- Expectations for placement and post-release; activities the juvenile will participate in, helping them understand that what happens in placement is geared to preparing them for success in school, work, and life
- PO/youth monitoring visit schedule
- How progress will be measured
- Home pass expectations

See sample "Single Plan" / Comprehensive Probation Plan template.

Relationship of the "Single Plan" to the facility's treatment plan. The idea is not for the facility to skip its own treatment planning and simply adopt probation's plan as its own. But the facility's plan should reflect the broader probation plan for the juvenile and further its goals. Ideally, good collaborative planning early on will enable the facility to tailor its approach to each juvenile in accordance with probation's objectives and expectations for that youth. The facility's Individual Service Plan (ISP), therefore, spells out how the facility plans to address the youth's needs and support the youth in accomplishing probation goals.

Communicating the "Single Plan"

Although POs are responsible for preparing and transmitting written documents (e.g., referral packet, probation plan) to the provider in a timely manner, there is no substitute for verbal communication between the PO and appropriate facility staff. Probation's plan for the juvenile must be communicated to the facility as early as possible. As opposed to simply opting out of the facility's initial planning process or passively signing off on facility-generated ISPs, probation needs to drive the process, but in a collaborative way.

As early as possible in the ISP/MCP development process and, if at all possible, in person,* the PO should use the opportunity to:

1. Provide vital background information about the family and perspective about community dynamics / resources.
2. Get the main points across in terms of the juvenile's risks and needs to be addressed, including short-term/placement targets and vision for aftercare supervision.
3. In order to reinforce the expectation that placement interventions are to be directed to helping youth prepare for life after placement, discuss probation's anticipated post-release plans regarding: living arrangement, education, career / vocational training and employment, and aftercare supervision.

* Ideally, the PO who developed the "Single Plan" should communicate it. If another PO conducted the predisposition investigation and recommended placement, it is suggested that both make the first visit.

4. Secure general understanding about probation's plan: go over each goal and corresponding objective and activities the juvenile is expected to complete during placement and what the aftercare period is likely to entail.

5. Discuss expectations for the provider in terms of services to be provided in support of probation plan goals / responding to the youth's risks, needs, and strengths (see next section).

6. Clarify the anticipated length of stay (LOS) in relation to the youth's risks and needs. The PO should communicate that the anticipated length of stay in placement, like the placement decision, is related to the severity of the offense and the risk the offender poses to the community's safety. The point here is that while a youth is expected to make progress on planned activities during placement, he should not continue in placement solely for the purpose of completing the program's "levels," earning another credit, or finishing an activity, let alone the notion of wanting to keep the youth until he's "fixed." Keep in mind that the anticipated LOS is an estimate only, and ultimate release recommendations and decisions should be made based on the youth's progress and a reassessment of the risk the youth poses, not on length of time spent in the program. One of the goals for the reform initiative is that lengths of stay will be reduced as a result of better probation practices, better collaboration and better utilization of community resources by youth on aftercare supervision so that they can complete plan objectives in their home.

7. Go over ground rules and expectations for home visits. Home visits should be an opportunity to practice new skills in the community and take steps to further reintegration planning. Every home pass should have goals, which relate directly to the implementation of probation plan activities.

8. Clarify expectations for facility involvement with the family (feedback after home visits, contact/observations during family placement visits).

9. Clarify expectations for facility reporting to probation and the court (frequency and content). The PO should request and maintain in the case file, periodic written reports from the facility documenting services delivered, their relationship to probation plan goals, and the progress of the juvenile in complying with plan objectives (see Monitoring section).

10. Clarify criteria for probation's designation of positive or negative discharge from placement. This will involve a discussion of "failure to adjust" and whether the failure was due to a mismatch or to provider or youth failure. It is hoped that better probation case management, better collaboration, and more directed services will reduce FTAs / increase positive discharges.

11. Clarify expectations for anticipated post-release therapeutic services (such as MST or FFT) and career/technical training that may need to be started prior to the youth's return home.

See sample Facility Reporting template.

Provider Preparation of the ISP

Coordinated planning between probation and provider during the facility's preparation of the ISP is intended to ensure that the facility's plan is fully aligned with probation's plan and that the facility agrees to provide the requested services. Although collaboration begins with the transmittal of the referral packet good practice and DPW regulations

Mission of Juvenile Residential Placement Facilities

According to the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrator's Performance-based Standards, the dual mission of juvenile correctional facilities is providing a safe environment and delivering effective programming. Several components are critical for creating a safe environment:

- **Safety:** management practices that promote safety and well-being of staff and youth
- **Order:** clear expectations of behavior that promote mutual respect, self discipline and order and an accompanying system of accountability for youth and staff
- **Security:** policies, procedures, and "hardware" (e.g., razor wire, locks and other security measures) that protect the public and promote a safe environment for youth and staff
- **Justice:** clear communication of the facility's rules and level system and the juvenile's legal rights, and the procedure for filing a grievance

POs should be familiar with the facility's approach for creating these "conditions of confinement."

Beyond creating a safe, orderly and secure environment, juvenile correctional facilities are to provide effective programming, including:

- **Treatment** that helps to identify and respond to a youth's mental health, substance abuse and related behavioral problems
- **Programming** that is directed toward reducing recidivism and increasing protection
- **Reintegration activities** that help prepare youth for successful reentry in the community

In terms of "treatment," research indicates that by itself, some form of individual or group counseling or therapy by licensed social workers and psychologists—where the focus is insight-oriented or psychodynamic—is not enough. Facilities need to use specific diagnostic and treatment protocols designed to help youth deal with victimization / trauma, control their mental illness or sexual aggression, or address their substance dependency or abuse. Although POs do not need to be experts in these protocols, they at least have to be familiar with the protocols being used.

Beyond treatment, "programming" must be directed toward helping youth achieve juvenile justice system outcomes—leaving the system more capable of being law-abiding and productive citizens who have taken steps to make amends. POs need to specify what services the provider will be expected to deliver that support the youth in accomplishing probation's plan. Here again, they don't need to be experts in how those services will be delivered, but they do need to know which ones the provider offers.

Programming aimed at reducing recidivism should target offenders' most critical or pressing "criminogenic needs" by engaging them in interventions designed to address those needs. Effective programming includes: 1) cognitive behavioral approaches and 2) skill training curricula and career and technical training certification, along with meaningful opportunities to practice skills and apply principles learned.

Research indicates that cognitive behavioral interventions are some of the most promising approaches for changing delinquent behavior. Based on the principle that deviant, impulsive behavior stems from deviant, impulsive thinking, a cognitive behavioral intervention:

- Helps offenders to understand how their thinking impacts their behavior
- Teaches them new skills and behavioral strategies for prosocial ways to think and behave
- Uses approaches that:
  - Restructure an offender's thinking (improving prosocial thought patterns) by examining thoughts, beliefs, values
  - Develop prosocial and moral reasoning skills to help offenders manage their environment

Skill training programs—whether teaching anger management skills or independent living skills—cannot be done haphazardly. An effective skill-training program: 1) employs a curriculum designed to improve a specific skill or set of skills; 2) taps competent and qualified facilitators and trains them to deliver the curriculum; 3) includes a teacher's manual and perhaps a student workbook; 3) incorporates various trainer techniques ("tell, show, do;" role playing, modeling, feedback, coaching); 4) consists of a series of sessions of an hour or so in duration; and 5) comes with a pre-test and a post-test designed to evaluate participant learning.

Beyond delivering skill-training curricula for teaching specific competency development skills, Pennsylvania is engaged in ongoing efforts to improve career and technical training and academic programming in facilities. Please see the sidebar on "Collaborating on Education and Workforce Development Components" for more information.

Research also indicates that interventions that do not ultimately build stronger relationships or bonds to pro-social entities for offenders in the community are unlikely to have long-term impact. In placement or on aftercare supervision, offenders need:

- Opportunities to practice and demonstrate new skills
- Opportunities to engage in experiential, productive activities
- Opportunities to establish positive relationships with law-abiding adults and peers
- Opportunities to form ties with pro-social community groups and institutions

Home visits, work furlough or meaningful community service (or other service-learning or helping activity) offer institutionalized youth the opportunity to practice and demonstrate newly learned skills. Facilities should engage youth in productive, hands-on experience with opportunities to learn or practice skills, strengthen relationships with prosocial adults in the community, and increase bonds to positive groups and institutions.

Sources:

The Performance-based Standards Institute, a subsidiary of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators. For more information go to www.pbstandards.org.

Torbet, P. and Thomas, D. (2005). *Advancing Competency Development: A White Paper for Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Hunninen, M. (forthcoming). *Advancing Competency Development: A Resource Guide for Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

point to a 30-day window for reaching agreement on the facility's willingness to support the youth in accomplishing probation's plan. During this time, providers conduct their own assessments, examine how responsive a youth is to change and what his learning style is, and figure out the best methods for helping youth change their behavior and learn new skills. Examples of corresponding services that providers may be expected to deliver to the youth or documentation that facilities may be expected to provide to probation include:

Community Protection Activities

Home Passes:

- Schedule home visits (probation plan specifies # and length of planned visits, both supervised / unsupervised)
- Review expectations / goals for visits w/ youth
- Specify activities to be accomplished w/ youth and parents
- Provide required notification to victim
- Document progress

Behavior / Attitude:

- Establish clear expectations for behavior / attitude
- Hold youth accountable for their behavior / attitude
- Facilitate internalization of prosocial behaviors / attitudes
- Document incidents and response
- Document progress: level / phase achieved

Accountability Activities

Community Service:

- Provide meaningful opportunities for youth to work off community service hours
- Facilitate completion of hours ordered (probation plan will specify # hours ordered / # hours to be completed each month in placement)
- Document # planned hours ordered / # completed

Restitution:

- Provide opportunities for youth to pay restitution
- Facilitate payment of $ ordered (probation plan will specify $ ordered / $ to be paid each month in placement)

Victim Awareness:

- Provide opportunity for youth to participate in victim awareness curriculum
- Document progress in completing modules; pre-test / post-test scores

Opportunities:

- Provide opportunity for youth to have a mentoring relationship with prosocial adult / peers
- Provide opportunity for youth to participate in other restorative justice activities (victim impact panel, apology letter)

Competency Development Activities

Academics:

- Conduct assessment, identify appropriate educational services and supports and develop education plan for youth
- Provide academic curriculum, services and supports for ___ hours / week[6]
- Provide remediation and accelerated learning opportunities for credit retrieval
- Provide PSSA or PASA assessment, if appropriate
- Request graduation requirements and educational records from home school district (if not already provided by PO) by _____

- Document credit attainment each report card period
- Document classroom behavior, projects completed, standardized test scores

Prosocial Skills Development:

- Conduct assessment, identify appropriate curricula and practice opportunities
- Provide curricula in social skills, anger management, or conflict resolution
- Deliver # hours / wk; complete __ out of __ modules / period
- Document progress and # hours planned / completed; completion of __ out of __ modules / sessions; pre-test / post-test scores

Moral Reasoning Skills Development:

- Conduct assessment, identify appropriate curricula and practice opportunities
- Provide curricula in moral reasoning skills
- Deliver # hours / week; complete __ out of __ modules / sessions
- Document progress and # hours planned / completed; completion of __ out of __ modules / sessions; pre-test / post-test scores
- Provide opportunities to apply and practice principles learned in an ongoing way so that taking responsibility for actions becomes part of daily life

Workforce Skills Development or Career Training:

- Conduct assessment, identify appropriate curricula and career and technical training opportunities
- Provide curricula in employment skills / setting career goals
- Provide meaningful career and technical training
- Deliver # hours / week; complete __ out of __ modules / sessions
- Document progress and # hours planned / completed; completion of __ out of __ modules / sessions; pre-test / post-test scores; credentials earned
- Provide opportunities to practice work skills in actual or protected work environment

Independent Living Skills Development:

- Conduct assessment, identify appropriate curricula and practice opportunities
- Provide curricula in independent living skills
- Deliver # hours / week; complete __ out of __ modules / sessions
- Document progress and # hours planned / completed; completion of __ out of __ modules / sessions; pre-test / post-test scores

Behavioral Health Treatment Activities

- Conduct assessment and identify appropriate treatment protocol
- Deliver protocol
- Document hours planned / spent in treatment (counseling / therapy)
- Document hours spent on PTSD curriculum; completion of __ out of __ modules / sessions; pre-test / post-test scores
- Document progress

Family Involvement Activities

- Facilitate planned family visits to facility (probation plan specifies # / frequency of family visits)
- Document observations of the interaction and any follow-up with youth

Reintegration Services

- Provide logistics (see section on reintegration planning)

Collaborating on Education and Workforce Development Components of the "Single Plan"

Improving academic performance and reducing school behavior problems have been shown to reduce delinquency. Likewise, assisting older youth in acquiring workforce development skills and participating in career/technical training lowers their risk for reoffending. Although the juvenile justice system is not responsible for fixing the problem of failing students or unemployed youth, probation officers do have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of their clients to address deficits or gaps in these areas. A significant outgrowth of Pennsylvania's Aftercare reform initiative has been the recognition of the importance of improving education and career and technical training opportunities to delinquent youth during and after placement and purposefully integrating activities related to these two competency development domains.

Ongoing efforts include:

- **Curriculum alignment:** Advancing improvements in education programming in residential facilities by aligning academic curricula with state standards
- **Industry standards:** Advancing improvements in career and technical training in residential facilities by aligning curricula with recognized industry standards and ensuring certification
- **Record transfer:** Ensuring speedy transfer of education records between host and home school districts by electronic means
- **Credit acceptance:** Ensuring academic and career/technical credit acceptance by home schools
- **Immediate engagement:** Ensuring smooth academic and career/technical training continuation in home communities for youth released from placement.

Collaborative planning requires discussions with both the host and home school districts regarding any number of considerations, such as record transfer, credits to be completed during placement and expectations for re-enrollment. Collaboration occurs at the beginning of placement and continues throughout the five phases. A checklist of activities at each point includes:

1. As part of the pre-disposition investigation, the PO should:
   - ✓ Identify a youth's academic needs and strengths based upon an assessment of the following areas: study and learning skills, school performance, attendance, conduct and engagement
   - ✓ Review information / records from the home school and discuss short and long-term education-related goals with appropriate teachers, school administrators, the youth and his parents
2. At the front-end, the PO should:
   - ✓ Clarify what the home school expectations are for the youth to be able to return following release from placement in the areas of school performance, attendance and behavior
   - ✓ Prompt the host school to conduct its own academic assessment for the purpose of identifying educational services to be delivered during placement
   - ✓ Facilitate transfer of education records between home and host schools by prompting the facility to request educational records from the home school
   - ✓ If post-release expectations include return to school, try to ensure that the youth is working on a curriculum aligned with the home school district and is earning credits in placement that will transfer back

3. During Placement, the PO should:
   - ✓ Monitor the youth's educational progress and ensure that credit attainment is properly documented
4. Prior to Release, the PO should:
   - ✓ Prepare for the youth's education reintegration and determine logistics (who does what, by when). Whenever possible, the PO should convene a meeting during the pre-release transition phase (or immediately upon release) that is attended by the convener (PO or other court rep), home school rep, placement school rep, the student, and parent for the purpose of:
     - Reviewing the student's accomplishments in placement, both educational (# of credits earned) and behavioral (in terms of the home school district's expectations for the youth's return)
     - Reviewing anticipated post-release expectations in light of the student's current educational goals:
       - Will student return to the home school or is an alternative educational placement warranted? If AEP, for how long?
       - What grade level will he return to?
       - Will student enter a GED program or career / vocational training program?
       - Will student enroll in community college?
     - Agreeing on the anticipated date of enrollment in home school / GED prep class / career training program
     - Discussing student's concerns about returning to home school
     - Discussing the school's concerns about the youth's return
     - Discussing parental support expected to help student succeed in school
     - Discussing home school district support to returning student: appropriate class and grade placement, access to social worker or guidance counselor, tutoring, special ed services, Student Assistance Program (SAP) team
     - Reviewing logistics: time school day begins/ends, class schedule, dress code and other student handbook rules (cell phones, drug policy, attendance), school-based or other probation officer assignment and any sign ins, class cards, etc.
5. While on Aftercare Supervision, the PO should:
   - ✓ Facilitate immediate school enrollment upon release from placement
   - ✓ Monitor the youth's educational progress, address issues.

See sample School Reintegration Meeting Protocol.

Sources:

Griffin, P. and Hunninen, M. (2008). "Preparing Youth for Productive Futures." *Pennsylvania Progress*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Mamas, S. (2006). Educational Aftercare & Reintegration Toolkit for Juvenile Justice Professionals. (tool 16). Pittsburgh, PA: Education Law Center. Download at http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads/english/juv-JPO%20Toolkit%2010-11-06.pdf.

Monitoring in Placement

Monitoring is an essential probation case management task. A PO keeps tabs on a juvenile's performance and progress while in placement and also monitors a provider's performance. The Single Plan can be considered a performance-based contract—between the PO and the youth/family and between probation and the provider—making monitoring easier and more purposeful. The monitoring task revolves around getting answers to questions about whether the juvenile (and facility) did what they said they would do (the performance part of the contract) and to what effect (the progress part).

Monitoring during placement should be done on a frequent basis:

- Minimum of monthly (required by JCJC Standards for specialized aftercare probation positions)
- Prior to regularly-scheduled review hearings by the court or regularly-scheduled meetings with supervisor
- When a PO transfers the case
- At the request of the facility
- At the request of the youth or parent
- Prior to release from placement (30 – 60 days)
- As frequently as the PO/supervisor deem necessary

Some of the visits should be by appointment and others may be unannounced. POs should be required to keep records, chronologically, of these visits, noting the date and reason for the visit, who was contacted, and any concerns or action required.

Monitoring performance and progress are accomplished through:

- Talking to the youth alone
- Conferring with facility staff (liaison, psychologist, social worker, case manager, or whoever knows the youth the best)
- Talking to the teachers of the host school
- Talking to youth and facility staff together
- Reviewing the probation plan and post release expectations
- Reviewing the facility's documentation (incident reports, progress reports, grades, etc)
- Talking to family members

Monitoring the youth's performance and progress during placement:[7]

POs need to determine whether juveniles are doing what they are supposed to do and what progress they made since the last visit. POs also need to keep them focused on reintegration. Prior to the visit, POs should review the plan and any facility documentation. During the visit, the discussion should revolve around plan goals, enlisting the following questions:

Community Protection:

Home Visits:

- What about home visits? Why do you believe you've earned one? What are your goals for the next one? What are you going to do during the visit? How will the visit prepare you for your return to the community?

  What happened on your most recent home visit?

  - Did you get along with your family?
  - Did you see old friends, how did that go?

- Did you learn any lessons?
- Did you accomplish anything in terms of looking for a job, signing up for school or Narcotics Anonymous?

- Did your family visit you recently? Did you talk by phone? How did that go?

Internal Controls:

- What's going right? What's one thing you've learned that will keep you out of trouble down the road?
- What's going wrong? What things do you still need to work on?
- Have you gotten into any disagreements or fights? With whom? What happened?
- (If a review hearing is coming up) What do you want to tell the judge about your progress?
- How are you going to handle "freedom" without the regimentation of placement?
- How do you plan to resist temptations, negative influences or peer pressure?
- How will you face the realities of the community / family to which you will be returning?
- Where will you get help to stay out of trouble? To whom will you turn if you need help?

Accountability:

- Have you completed any of your community service or restitution obligations this month?
- Have you participated in any victim awareness classes?
- What have you learned about the impact of your crime on your victim?

Competency Development:

Academic:

- How much time do you spend in school?
- What subjects are you taking?
- How are you doing in school?
- Are you getting any help with reading or math?
- Are you learning study skills?

Workforce, Prosocial, Moral Reasoning, or Independent Living Skills Development:

- Have you participated in any classes to teach you about ____ (anger management social skills, conflict resolution, connecting thoughts and actions, job readiness, etc.)
- What are you learning in these ____ skill development classes?
- Have you had any opportunities to practice what you've learned?

Behavioral Health Treatment:

- Have you participated in any counseling or therapy sessions to talk about your substance abuse, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress….?
- How is that going?
- What are you learning about yourself and how are you going to use those insights?

Post-release Expectations:

- What are your education or career goals following release from placement? What are you doing to further those goals?
- Where will you live and with whom?

When conferring with facility staff, teachers, social workers regarding the youth's performance and progress, questions should elicit their perceptions / opinions as to the youth's attendance and participation in scheduled activities, attitude and behavior; accomplishments and set-backs; any new

insights regarding the juvenile's needs and strengths or any other concerns; and plans for supporting youth in probation plan objectives during the next month/period.

Monitoring the facility's performance:

In order to be good consumers of institutional services, POs should understand the facility's goals, its' values, techniques, strategies, and resources and become familiar with the facility's routines. Being good consumers will assist POs in monitoring the facility's performance with a particular youth.

Monitoring is aimed at determining whether the provider delivered the agreed to services. In other words, did the facility do what it said it would do? (Note that the more substantive issue of quality—how "good" the services were to begin with or how competently or effectively they were delivered—needs to be a matter for training.) Prior to each monitoring visit, the PO should review the probation plan and the facility's progress reports and documentation for the reporting period. During the visit, the PO can check what the facility said it delivered against the juvenile's account and confer with relevant facility staff as to any discrepancies, reasons for non-delivery (or non-compliance on the part of the youth), and plans for the next month/period.

The facility's reporting should include information about the youth for the reporting period, including the planned and actual hours or sessions the juvenile spent in a particular activity, the relevant staff member's perspective on the youth's progress, any comments regarding why the facility did not provide the service or why the juvenile failed to participate, and a brief description of the plan for the next month/period.

See sample Facility Reporting template.

Documenting a Youth's Progress:

POs should keep a chronological record of their placement visits and, on a regular basis, document offender progress and compliance with the terms of the probation plan. On the basis of information gathered during discussions with the youth, facility staff, host teachers, or parents or as a result of reviewing relevant documents, a PO should determine the level of progress on an activity or compliance to a condition outlined in the plan using a predetermined and approved format, such as the following scale:

0 = No Progress / Willful non-Compliance

1 = Less than Expected Progress / Pattern of non-Compliance

2 = Expected Progress (Sufficient Progress or Improving) / Pattern of Compliance

3 = Completed Activity

POs should document interim progress on all plan objectives at least every three months, or in advance of a review hearing. (Note: POs should record intermediate outcomes on each goal at the time of case closing.) Interim progress recording provides the impetus for officers to periodically review and assess placement activities and has real utility for both officers and supervisors. Such documentation will make meetings between officers and supervisors more productive. They can review and discuss each juvenile's progress on plan objectives to date as well as the facility's efforts in delivering agreed upon services.

Rewards and Sanctions[8]

As officers of the court, POs are responsible for holding youth accountable for achieving the objectives outlined in the comprehensive probation plan and complying with the court order. When a youth is not progressing or in compliance, the PO

must determine whether the juvenile is unwilling or unable to comply. Less than expected progress should not automatically be blamed on the youth; it may be the result of an inadequate plan, inadequate service delivery, or a misconceived strategy. The youth, for example, may lack fundamental skills, thus making compliance impossible. If the youth is unable to comply, the plan will need to be reformulated to address the deficiencies. On the other hand, if the lack of progress or compliance is deemed to have been willful, the PO must decide the best way to respond.

POs should be adept at using rewards for progress and compliance and sanctions for lack of progress or noncompliance. Although POs may handle most minor violations or incidents of noncompliance, willful and deliberate noncompliance should always be reported to the court, no matter how minor. As officers of the court, POs have a unique legal obligation to inform the court of any juvenile behavior that violates the court order. The court should resolve major violations—including any that are serious enough to have resulted in the filing of a petition if the juvenile were not already under court supervision.

The probation officer's ability to deliver sanctions and rewards is dependent upon the court's support. The probation department should operate with a realistic view of the court's position. A probation officer should neither promise nor threaten what the court will not deliver.

The point about rewards and sanctions is that they should be delivered with consistency, immediacy and certainty. Sanctions should be graduated in intensity and rewards should be graduated in value. While it may be unrealistic to expect perfect performance or compliance, it is equally unrealistic to expect that ignoring acts of noncompliance will lead to the juvenile making desired behavior changes. In this sense, POs need to guard against being enablers, excusing or rationalizing delinquent behavior or violations. On the other hand, rather than viewing noncompliance or lack of progress as a defeat or a failure, a good probation officer seizes it as a teaching opportunity—holding them accountable for their behavior while engaging them in making the needed changes (see "Rewards and Sanctions" sidebar.)

Rewards and Sanctions		
Level of Progress / Compliance	**Appropriate Responses:**	
Expected Progress / Pattern of Compliance:	Positive reinforcement for sufficient progress, improvement, or compliance where the ultimate incentive is the potential for early release from placement	Allow youth to contribute input regarding incentives or rewards: Verbal praise Written notes commending praiseworthy conduct Material prizes Privileges (outings) More freedoms (home pass) Early Release (ultimate reward)
Less than Expected Progress / Pattern of non-Compliance	Motivate and facilitate participation and engagement in plan activities, sequence activities, change plan	Look for teachable moments Examine whether unwilling or unable
No Progress / Willful non-Compliance (e.g., failure to adjust in placement or major violation)	Progressive sanctioning ■ Increased drug or alcohol testing ■ More community service hours ■ Hold back at level / longer stay in placement ■ Request hearing for judicial warning, modification of order or change in placement or plan	Two principles: ■ Economy: response chosen is the minimum likely to produce the desired result ■ Proportionality: level of response should equal the level of the offense
New Allegation	Petition on new offense	Revoke probation More structured or secure institution Waiver to criminal court (ultimate sanction)

The "Single Plan" for Reintegration

Everything up to this point should have been directed toward preparing the youth for reintegration into the community. Focusing placement programming on post-placement goals is intended to help young people improve their ability to function within society, more effectively relate to their families and friends (old and new), and achieve juvenile justice system outcomes.

As a living document, the "Single Plan" will be refined as the juvenile's expected release from placement date gets nearer. At each phase, planning revolves around:

- **Pre-Release Transition:** Transitioning youth from the structure of institutionalization to progressively increased responsibility and freedom in the community (30 to 60 days prior to release, Phase 3),
- **Release and Reintegration:** Preparing youth for immediate engagement (within the first 30 days after release, Phase 4) in school, work, and/or job training, finding a suitable living arrangement, and setting up services, and
- **Aftercare Supervision:** Determining the right mix of aftercare supervision, surveillance and control that keeps the community and the youth safe (the 3 – 6 month aftercare period, Phase 5).

Purposeful, collaborative planning for these phases of staged transition, engagement, and reintegration activity, conceivably covering a 4 – 8 month timeframe, is similar to the planning that occurred when the juvenile went into placement. Here again, planning must be done far enough in advance to not just plan, but to adequately prepare for subsequent phases.

Collaborative planning and preparation on the part of the PO, the facility and host and home school districts prior to the anticipated release date includes input from the youth and his guardians. At some point the PO, youth and family should:

- Review the youth's progress and performance in placement (on the basis of monitoring during placement)
- Review the anticipated post-release expectations for school, work, and living arrangement to determine whether they are still appropriate
- Go over expectations for transition, immediate engagement and reintegration in terms of broad goals and objectives to be achieved during each phase
- Identify activities the juvenile needs to complete at each phase.

The single plan's modification for reintegration will be based upon a review of the youth's progress toward plan objectives made during placement, a current assessment of the risk the youth poses to community safety, and a re-examination of the anticipated post-release expectations regarding living arrangement, school, and work. The plan will address the same issues as before, but this time activities for pre-release, immediate engagement and reintegration will be staged accordingly.

Community Protection:
What level of aftercare supervision will be required to protect the victim and the community immediately upon release and over the course of the anticipated period of aftercare supervision? What additional methods of surveillance will be needed and how will the offender's day be structured to manage the risk he poses? What behaviors must be monitored? Do any rules of probation apply to aftercare supervision? Factors to be considered at this point include some of the same static risk factors that were considered

in making the placement recommendation, such as prior placement history. But the assessment should also consider the juvenile's response to placement (cooperative, abides by rules, engages in program), progress toward achieving plan objectives, his age and abilities, any outstanding victim considerations, the environment to which he will return, and the options available to probation for surveillance and control.

Absent significant testing during home passes, the static risk factors which led to the placement disposition will be dominant in the determination of the level of aftercare supervision. Keep in mind that how well a youth behaves while under the structure and full-time supervision of placement is not necessarily predictive of behavior in the community. The true measure of reduced risk is whether the youth is able to apply lessons learned during placement in the community—has the youth learned to internalize controls that will result in prosocial attitudes and behaviors—so that the external controls provided by the facility can be removed.

During phase 3, home visits and brief excursions into the community would be opportunities to test a youth's readiness and suitability for return.[9] Activities could include: making contact with the home school district, checking out career and technical training programs, scouting around for potential employers, and identifying opportunities in the community for prosocial engagement (mentors, clubs, etc.). Logistics should be a topic for discussion between probation, the provider and the youth and family during the transition phase.

Once a decision is made to begin formal reentry, "step-down" activities may include relatively brief stays in transitional living arrangements, such as halfway or group homes, or assignment to day/evening reporting programs. Curfew, tracking services, electronic monitoring, and random drug and alcohol testing may also be used, depending on the youth's assessed risk at the point of release. This initial level of more intensive control and surveillance is reduced as the youth moves through the aftercare experience (phase 5), exhibiting prosocial attitudes and behaviors and justifying increased freedom of action.

The PO should also consider the potential risk to the offender's safety upon returning home—particularly the risk of retaliation or other presenting community danger—and plan appropriate measures to keep the juvenile safe.

Offender Accountability:
What outstanding accountability obligations (community service or restitution) remain? How will the juvenile complete them? If the juvenile has completed the victim awareness curriculum, is he in a position to write a letter of apology to the victim? Are there any victim considerations (no contact order) that must be factored into the reentry plan? How will the youth be held accountable for his behavior while on aftercare supervision? (See "Philadelphia's ROC Protocol" sidebar.)

Competency Development:
What skills did the juvenile acquire / what strengths were developed during placement that can be leveraged? What were the anticipated post-release expectations for school, work and living; are they still appropriate? What behavior problems or skill deficits continue to put the juvenile at risk for criminal activity? What obstacles exist surrounding immediate engagement in school, work or job training? What supports or plans are needed to overcome them? What opportunities exist in the community to practice skills and help the youth make connections with prosocial activities / peers, mentors? How does the juvenile plan to structure his free time? Should the juvenile's

Philadelphia's Reintegration Oversight Committee (ROC) Protocol

In order to hold youth accountable for violating the terms of their probation (e.g. aftercare) supervision, the Philadelphia Family Court has instituted a protocol for reviewing and resolving violations. If, under certain conditions, a youth: 1) fails to maintain appropriate contact with the PO or the facility's reintegration worker (RW), 2) fails to comply with drug or alcohol treatment and/or has more than one positive drug screen, or 3) fails to comply with school or employment requirements, the protocol outlines procedures the PO takes to attempt to resolve the matter. First, the PO and RW are to have a joint meeting with the youth and family to attempt to reinforce the conditions and address the need for additional supports. If the youth continues to be non-compliant, the RW calls an interagency meeting to include the youth, parent, RW, RW supervisor and the PO. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the matter is referred to the ROC. The youth, PO, RW and family member are required to attend the meeting, which is co-chaired by the Reintegration Manager and Probation Director of Aftercare. The goal for the meeting is to reach agreement on the changes or additions that will be made to the Reintegration Plan.

Source:

Philadelphia Family Court, Reintegration Oversight Committee Protocol, 12/1/06.

dependency case be kept open so that he can receive services to age 21?

The plan should specify the staged activities the youth will engage in during pre-release transition, immediate engagement and aftercare supervision phases that will support achievement of objectives in the following areas:

- Living arrangement / housing
- Education, vocational/career training
- Employment / job placement
- Community supports
- Peer network
- Leisure time activities, hobbies, recreation

Behavioral and Physical Health Services:
What mental health or substance abuse issues need to be managed in the community? What medications need to be continued upon release? What medical or physical conditions must be attended to? Research suggests that reinforcing what offenders have accomplished in placement with respect to their behavioral health treatment—and employing the same therapeutic approach—after they are released increases their likelihood of success in the community.[10]

Family Supports:
What support does the family need to facilitate the youth's reintegration back into the family? What services do they want or need and how should they be staged? What community resources are available to them?

The PO and provider need to determine how best to plan, coordinate, and sequence logistics in support of the plan, including such things as:

- Arranging for, enrolling in, and setting up appointments for services: drug / alcohol out-patient counseling, AA meetings
- Getting any outstanding papers / official documents in one folder: working papers, social security card, birth certificate,

immigration papers, proof of residence, immunization record

- Taking driving test and getting driver's license or bus pass
- Transferring education records/transcript between host and home school
- Enrolling in a career training or job skills training program
- Arranging housing, if not returning to family
- Arranging for 30-day prescriptions or medical records / appointments
- Reviewing eligibility and procedure for getting medical assistance card upon release

As part of its discharge planning process, the provider should take the lead on attending to or assisting the youth in completing these logistics. Just as there was a referral packet that accompanied the youth into placement, a "reentry packet" would follow the youth back into the community. A reentry packet could include papers from all of the logistics above, some kind of letter/statement from youth about what he's learned in placement, schedule of appointments, a copy of the probation plan for reintegration, and relevant legal information, such as record expungement.

Brokering and Linking to Community Resources

The model for comprehensive aftercare operating in county juvenile probation departments hinges on the availability of community resources that juvenile offenders can use to support successful reintegration and ongoing positive youth development. The relevant case management task here involves POs making the necessary arrangements and linkages with the full range of public and private sector organizations and individuals in the community that can support these efforts. It means linking institutions and communities in ways that will better facilitate pre-release planning, smoother transitioning, and longer-term follow-up. It means backing up community linkages into the institutions. It means using MST, FFT, and Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care, some of the "Blueprints" programs, at the back end.

Most important, all of the youth's community support systems, formal and informal, must be coordinated around the plan with a clear understanding of who is responsible for what, and how communication will flow smoothly to avoid duplication of services or conflicting demands on the youth. Just as the PO needs to coordinate school reentry, the PO should also take the initiative to convene a meeting of all support systems that will surround the youth and ensure appropriate collaboration.

This task also extends beyond an individual case as POs advocate on behalf of the department for greater utilization of community resources by their clients. This includes identifying the potential for greater involvement of informal networks in the community / grass-roots organizations and local affiliates of national organizations in providing services to adolescent offenders. As advocates, POs should communicate a clear message regarding the juvenile justice system's goals and how the community can step up to support those goals. It means dispelling community fears, increasing presence in communities and neighborhoods, and identifying local leaders, churches, and small businesses that can serve as mentors and provide opportunities for positive peer interaction and development of competencies. It also means identifying gaps in services and supports, and advocating through the proper channels to ensure that these gaps are filled. The *Competency Development Resource Guide* (forthcoming) includes descriptions of a variety of education and workforce development

resources that could support a youth during reintegration.

Next Steps

This paper outlines strategies for implementing the probation-related goals of the Joint Policy Statement on Aftercare. County probation departments can examine their current practice against it, adopt or adapt the sample templates, and plan and implement improvements. But the model is not complete. The All-sites group (and the 2nd and 3rd wave pilot counties) will continue to develop and refine tools for use by other counties and document and disseminate "best practices" as they are identified. For example, Allegheny County is automating its Comprehensive Probation Plan, which would greatly facilitate its development and modification. Judges and attorneys must be briefed on the model so that they understand the purposes behind each of the five phases and related probation case management responsibilities.

In particular, the "All-sites" group recognizes that reforming aftercare and improving probation case management practices will take education and training for probation officers, supervisors, and chiefs. The following is a potential list of topics:

- Big picture context: overview of research on how delinquency develops, continues, and desists and the best interventions and methods for reducing recidivism and increasing protection; juvenile justice goals and outcomes and realistic system responses; and link between good probation practices, juvenile's use of services and completion of activities designed to produce desired results and lower rates of rearrest and higher rates of positive outcomes.
- Assessing juvenile's risks, needs, strengths and developmental issues and prioritizing the most critical or pressing criminogenic needs that will be the focus of intervention
- Writing good plans (objectives and corresponding activities)
- Communicating probation's plan, securing consensus and establishing a working partnership with providers, schools, and community agencies
- Engaging families in the placement and supervision process
- Monitoring progress of juvenile, parent, provider
- Rewarding / sanctioning / enforcement
- Advocating on behalf of juvenile in school / community
- Facilitating to help juveniles participate, complete and benefit from services that are designed to achieve outcomes; motivating resistant youth/parents to change
- Documenting intermediate outcomes at case closing (to what effect did juvenile achieve IO of being law abiding, productive, and connected)
- Incorporating "lessons learned" from the reform initiative.

Endnotes

[1] Please see the Joint Policy Statement on Aftercare, the Pennsylvania Goal Summaries and the three White Papers.

[2] The Juvenile Law Center, as the lead entity of the Models for Change initiative in Pennsylvania, chairs this committee.

[3] The initial round of pilot counties includes Allegheny, Cambria, Lycoming and York county demonstrations funded by PCCD and Philadelphia's Reintegration Initiative funded by DHS, the Philadelphia Family Court, and the MacArthur Foundation.

[4] Please see the January 2007 issue of *Pennsylvania Progress*, "Aftercare Reality and Reform," that describes the intent behind each of the Joint Policy Statement's 17 bullet points, current practice, and reforms underway, also available on line at http://www.pccd.state.pa.us/pccd/lib/pccd/pubs/progress/aftercare_reality_and_reform_07.pdf

[5] Chung, H. L., Schubert, C. A., Mulvey, E.P. (2007). An Empirical Portrait of Community Reentry Among Serious Juvenile Offenders in Two Metropolitan Cities. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 34, 11, 1402-1426.

[6] In order to achieve progress on education objectives, students should be expected to engage in academic instruction, etc. for at least 25 hours / week.

[7] Griffin, P. "Aftercare, Part One: The Before Part." *Pennsylvania Progress.* Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

[8] Griffin, P. and Torbet, P. (2002). *Desktop Guide to Good Juvenile Probation Practice.* Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice. See pages 77 and 78.

[9] JCJC's Standards Governing Home Passes to Delinquent Children in Placement should be considered.

[10] Altschuler, David, M. and Brash, Rachel. (2004). *Adolescent and Teenage Offenders Confronting the Challenges and Opportunities of Reentry.* Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, p. 80.

ModelsforChange

Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

Models for Change is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform through targeted investments in key states, with core support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to the public. The initiative is underway in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana and Washington.

PENNSYLVANIA'S AFTERCARE INITIATIVE

Since its 2003 Plan to the Governor, aftercare reform has been a priority for Pennsylvania's State Advisory Group, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Pennsylvania's aftercare initiative, informed by principles of a comprehensive system set forth in the "Joint Policy Statement on Aftercare," commits Pennsylvania to having a comprehensive aftercare system in place, statewide, by 2010. This document is one of several being developed to reach that goal.

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