

## **TREATMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

- AUTHORITY:** California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Section 1355 and 1356  
Administrative Directive
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 3-8-006, dated 01/04/18
- FORMS:** None
- PURPOSE:** To establish the program treatment philosophy at the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA).

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

It is a basic expectation that each shift staff are prepared, willing and able to maintain continuous, ongoing, positive interactions and dialogues with the youth at YLA on an individual and group basis, regardless of group or individual dynamics. The general goals of the program are to:

- A. Employ short-term behavior controls.
- B. Gain compliance to facility standards in an effort to assist the youth in internalizing appropriate community values during their incarceration period for illegal activities.
- C. Evaluate treatment plans: the assigned unit DJCO II is the primary person responsible to facilitate the youth's treatment plan. This will include evaluation of: the youth's substance abuse severity, behavioral development, educational development, vocational development, emotional issues and development, transitional plans, and all other identified treatment needs.
- D. Provide Individual Case Plans for each youth: The plans will be developed by the youth's treatment team which consists of the assigned unit DJCO II, the unit supervisor, the youth's assigned Deputy Probation Officer (when available) and other involved treatment team members (e.g. psychologists, alcohol and drug abuse service therapists, school counselor, job placement specialists, etc.). The youth's assigned Deputy Juvenile Correctional Officer II will monitor the youth's progress in the unit as well as the completion of their Individual Case Plan throughout the youth's stay at YLA.
- E. Refer identified youth and/or their families to appropriate community agencies for follow-up care upon their release from the facility per "continuity of care" guidelines and concepts.

### **II. TREATMENT FRAMEWORK**

- A. The youth at YLA have developed a value system in many areas that is in conflict with the community at large. This can be attributed to the anti-social lifestyle they

have been living and a possible lack of guidance. The characteristics of the youth at YLA can be identified as follows:

1. Immaturity: **Their emotional and behavioral responses are not age appropriate.**
2. Inability to delay gratification: They have problems with functioning in delayed gratification.
3. Low self-esteem: They have low **self-esteem** and a poor self-image.
4. Poor impulse control: They have problems controlling their impulses.
5. Poor response to authority: They have difficulty understanding and accepting authority.
6. Inability to deal with feelings: They have difficulty tolerating frustration and appropriately managing their feelings. They have developed ineffective coping mechanisms, which often include addictive behaviors. They have difficulty adjusting to situations that will not change.
7. Poor communication and social skills: They have difficulty communicating appropriately and effectively with their peers and authority figures. They have difficulty developing meaningful interpersonal relationships because of inadequate skills, self-absorption, and low **self-esteem**.
8. Inability to accept behavioral consequences: They are generally unwilling to accept responsibility for their own conduct. They project blame onto others for their own misbehavior. They are either unwilling or unable to evaluate and equate conduct with consequences. They have demonstrated an inability to conform to rules, regulations and standards of conduct.
9. Dishonesty: They are dishonest and have difficulty in being truthful especially about their own behavior and will convincingly be untruthful to authorities.
10. Manipulation: They will manipulate to obtain what they want.
11. Denial: They will have tremendous difficulty in seeing their own addictions, behavioral and emotional issues even in the midst of adverse consequences of their behavior.
12. Feelings of being a victim: They will have feelings that “everyone” is out to get them and that they are helpless to change or accept responsibility for their behavior and life because of what they’ve “been through.” They have difficulty in separating their own victimization with the need to accept responsibility for their own inappropriate actions.
13. Basic educational deficits: They have educational deficits, which may include learning disabilities and credit and grade level deficiencies.

14. Cognitive distortions: They have critical “thinking errors” which lead them to make poor choices.
- B. Although most of the youth will have some problems in all of the above-mentioned areas, it is anticipated that there will be some areas that are more debilitating to individual youths. Consequently, the case plan for each youth will strongly focus on the areas that are causing the most problems while at the same time keeping in mind the goal of helping each of them to function better in all the areas. The goals of treatment will be a microcosm of those behaviors that are valued in a general community.
- C. **One premise of the YLA treatment program** is that people are responsible for their **own** behavior. This premise attempts to negate the notion that prior events explain current behavior and that people are still responsible for their behavior and its ramifications. Thus, when we see a person acting sad, depressed, or angry, we accept his feelings but we still consider him responsible for how he deals with those feelings.
- D. In order to deal with behavior, it must be expressed. Thus, the treatment program will encourage the expression of problems and conflicts, while at the same time keeping in mind that the youth will be expected to remain responsible for their actions.
- E. Each youth will be given the responsibility to deal with his own problems as much as possible. To do otherwise would be to communicate to him that he is incapable of dealing with his own behavior and this would reinforce his tendency to become institutionalized. If **the youth becomes** institutionalized then our efforts at rehabilitation **are likely to fail**.
- F. **Youth should be encouraged to help each other while in the YLA program. By helping each other the youth will learn** to communicate more effectively with others; reach outside oneself **by** sharing problems; and increase feelings of self-worth for having helped someone else.

### III. GENERAL TREATMENT AREAS AND STRATEGIES

Listed below are the eleven general treatment areas and strategies that may be used when working with the youth. These areas are not all-inclusive; however, it is felt that they are general and inclusive enough to encompass the treatment goals for the youth with whom we deal. It is hoped that the program goals will **facilitate** their **transition and reintegration** back into the community.

- A. Develop acceptance of personal responsibility for one's conduct
1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area exhibit behavioral symptoms of either projecting blame onto others for their own misconduct or denying any responsibility for their own conduct.
  2. In working with a youth who is experiencing behavior problems in this area, staff should rely on both individual and group procedures in teaching:
    - a. Awareness of **their** own thoughts, feelings, and motivations.

- b. Perceptions and predictions of responses in others.
- c. The impact of **their behaviors** on each other.
- d. Behavioral restructuring for dealing with the environment in a more positive manner.

B. Gain acceptance of a value system more compatible with the community at large

- 1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area usually have a value system that is in conflict with the general community. The more divergent the youth's values from the community, the higher the probability that they will experience problems. They usually give the overall impression of feeling that their way of life is comfortable, effective, and satisfactory. Problems, if admitted, are minimized and not seen as internal struggles but rather represent conflicts between themselves and some aspects of the external world.
- 2. In working with a youth who is in need of treatment in this area, staff should create situations where the child's genuine feelings can be expressed and **restructured**. For example, using role-playing techniques in individual counseling where the child can express the feelings about various social values he strongly disagrees with and then having him reverse roles and play the part of the authority figures (parent, police officer, teacher, and counselor).
- 3. Staff need to demonstrate that they are concerned about the youth's divergent ideas, values, and feelings by listening and being nonjudgmental. However, staff also needs to explain to the youth the problems associated with having a divergent value system. Staff should accept the youth's need for peer support, which many times is the basis for his divergent values. By staff directly meeting the youth's dependency needs, it will reduce his tendency to rely on such compensatory mechanisms as denial of needs and rejection of adults as potential need gratifiers. Staff need to help the youth reduce his tendency to stereotype others. This can be accomplished via peer group feedback.

C. Develop the ability to conform to rules, regulations, and specific standards of conduct

- 1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area will experience problems following any rules, regulations, or living up to behavioral standards.
- 2. Although the major focus should be on developing internal psychological control, initial external controls are necessary. The content of the controls should be reality based and should coincide with the youth's expectations. For example, if a youth cannot handle the relatively unstructured situation of free time as determined by his behavior, his time will need to be more structured. This can include complete separation from the group, an assigned task/area within the group, or more concentrated attention and supervision within the activity. The reason for the external controls should be explained to the youth in a way that he knows that his behavior is what

determines the degree of external control required. Internal controls should be encouraged. **DJCOs** should "play it straight" with the youth and demand the same from him. Issues of control may be used therapeutically by the **DJCO** for the purposes of communicating support and concern. The youth may raise issues relating to trust and personal acceptance by deliberately challenging the **DJCO's** rules or personal standards. After enforcing standards, the **DJCO** should focus on the underlying feelings and problems. This should not preclude the **DJCO's** introducing realistic limits, not only as support but also as a means of meeting the expectations of the youth in this regard.

D. Develop and understand acceptance of authority

1. The first manner of responding includes those youth who set up the battleground regarding power and control whenever they perceive the power of another is likely to have impact on them. They usually fight against authority, both suddenly and obviously. They actively attempt to eliminate restrictions on their freedom.
2. A youth who exhibits the behavior symptoms of this type will initially demand (behaviorally) external control even though the goal is to help him progress to the point where he is controlling his own behavior. In working with the youth, staff should be patient, able to persevere through the youth's constant challenging, and not be easily distracted from the treatment focus by the youth's acting-out behavior.
3. There should be individual **interaction** between the **DJCO** and the youth as much as possible. The emphasis in dealing with the youth's inappropriate behavior should be on situational counseling. In individual and group counseling, role-playing techniques are used wherein the youth plays the authority figure and the authority figure plays the youth.
4. The second manner of responding includes those youth who view all authority as being rigid and authoritarian. They usually respond to authority by over-conformity on the surface level. These youth usually respond to staff in a subservient manner. They commonly present themselves as being helpless. They often are fearful and anticipate being rejected. They have a tendency to develop strong dependent relationships with sympathetic adults.
5. A youth who exhibits behavior symptoms of this type should be encouraged to explore the environment and, at the same time, permit him to experience the consequences of his exploratory actions. Initially, staff will have to permit the youth to be dependent on them. However, the main goal in treating a youth with problems in this area should be helping him develop personal autonomy and independence.

E. Develop the ability to express or suppress feelings and emotions in a more constructive, socially-acceptable manner

**Youth** who are in need of treatment in this general area will exhibit two behavioral extremes:

1. The youth who consistently ventilates his feelings and emotions.
  - a. The youth who consistently ventilates his feelings and emotions will need to learn how to suppress and deal with these feelings and emotions in ways that are not injurious to himself or others.
  - b. External controls will be necessary initially in dealing with the **youth** exhibiting acting-out behavior. However, the major goal is the development of internal psychological control. The youth should be encouraged to develop and use appropriate inner controls. Issues of control may be used therapeutically by the **DJCO** for the purposes of communicating support and concern. For example, expressing genuine concern to the youth over how his acting-out behavior is self-injurious. The **DJCO** should concentrate on the underlying feelings and emotions that are causing the acting-out behavior and should help the youth develop socially acceptable alternative ways of dealing with his feelings and emotions. Considerable emotional support for the youth should be forthcoming from the **DJCO** while conflicts are being resolved, particularly during crisis situations.
2. The youth who is withdrawn and/or suppressed.
  - a. The youth who is withdrawn and/or suppressed will need to get his feelings out in the open, deal with them, and become aware of how they affect him and others. A youth who exhibits problems in this area may have given up on satisfying relationships with adults. He perceives adults as being unwilling or unable to meet his dependency needs.
  - b. In dealing with a youth who is experiencing problems in this area, the **DJCO** should demonstrate support and concern for him while minimizing the threat of adult power. Search out the youth's negative expectations and feelings without rejecting the youth. Communicate through actions as well as words. **DJCOs** should give time and attention in activities with the youth.

F. Gain the ability to develop more meaningful interpersonal relationships

1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area will exhibit some or all of the following behaviors:
  - a. Inadequate social skills
  - b. Self-centeredness
  - c. Easily influenced by others
  - d. Buying of friendship
  - e. Fear and distrust of others

2. In working with a youth who is experiencing problems in this area, staff will need to protect him from peer group scapegoating and abuse. A youth should be involved with work group programs to develop peer-relating capabilities. Staff will have to be instructive in their dealings with the youth. The **DJCO** must clarify for the youth the meaning of specific behavior acts. Acting-out behavior must be limited in a matter-of-fact manner as much as possible without allowing the youth to interpret limits as hostility or rejection. The **DJCO** needs to be sensitive to evidence of tension in the youth and to simplify demands or remove pressure during the tension periods. Any attempts at self-control or self-responsibility should be rewarded. Many youth who are in need of treatment in this area are completely dominated by need for social approval. They will say or do anything in order to be approved by their peers. They generally yield to peer group pressure in the presence of peers and to adult pressure in the presence of adults.

G. Build frustration tolerance

1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area usually exhibit acting-out behavior whenever their goal-oriented behavior is blocked. They view other people as barriers to their needs for gratification. They are not able to see how their behavior brings about the responses they receive from others. They tend to view the actions of others as being arbitrary and, consequently, the principal cause of their frustration.
2. In working with youth who exhibit problems in this area, staff need to help them come to the realization that experiencing some frustration is part of life, and their ability to tolerate and deal with it in a socially acceptable manner is an important part of their readjustment back into the community.
3. It is assumed that all human behavior is directed toward the gratification of needs. Therefore, it will be part of the staff's responsibility to help the youth develop ways of gratifying their needs in ways that are not injurious to themselves or other people.

H. Develop impulse control

1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area exhibit behavior that is exemplified by acting on the spur of the moment without considering the consequences that the behavior will have on themselves or other people.
2. In working with a youth who is in need of treatment in this area, staff need to be supportive in helping the youth **develop impulse control**. The youth has to be given clear, unambiguous structure. Demands should be simple and concrete. The counselor should be tolerant, supportive, protective, instructive, and non-threatened by inappropriate and primitive outbursts. Any attempts on the youth's part at self-control should be rewarded.

I. Develop the ability to evaluate and equate conduct with consequence

Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area are not able to see that their behavior is what brings the consequences and responses they receive from

other people. They tend to see consequences placed upon them as being based solely on the capriciousness of staff, parents, or others.

J. Develop the ability to function in terms of delayed gratification

1. Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area will exhibit behavior that is directed toward the immediate gratification of their needs. Behavior exhibited is characteristically infantile and self-centered. Staff should help the youth realize that in order to successfully function in the community, he will need to understand and accept the fact there will be times when his needs cannot be immediately gratified. He will also need to learn the socially acceptable behavior necessary to increase the probability that his needs will be met. This will be accomplished by having the youth participate in classes and activities that emphasize the development of social skills.
2. Needs have to be met for the survival and growth of the individual. However, as a person develops from infant to adult, the **individuals'** need pattern becomes more complex. Consequently, the individual has to learn how to gratify needs in ways that do not infringe on the rights of others. They also need to adjust to the fact that many times the needs are gratified only after long periods of time in conjunction with hard work, and sometimes they never will be met.
3. In an adolescent's living experience in the program, many of the rewards (early release, furloughs, and special privileges) will be received only after hard work on the youth's part. Also, from a behaviorist's viewpoint, the kind of behavior exhibited by a youth who is in need of treatment in this area will be dealt with by rewarding behavior we want and withdrawing reward for behavior that is inappropriate.

K. Accept and adjust to situations that will not change

Youth who are in need of treatment in this general area usually experience difficulties in accepting and functioning within the realities of their life situation. They usually attempt to excuse their behavior by projecting blame onto a particular situation. Many times, their home environment is rigid, unrewarding, and there is little hope for change. However, the alternative of placing the youth outside the home is less desirable in both legal and psychological terms. Staff will need to help the youth realize that there are some life situations that will not change and if they are going to make a successful adjustment back into the community, they will have to adjust and function within many situations that are not ideal. Staff will need to stress that a youth's situation is not a valid excuse for unacceptable behavior, and they will be held personally responsible and accountable for their behavior in the community.

**REFERENCES:**

Procedures:	3-1-306	Facility Case Planning and Case Reviews
	3-8-B	Program Description-Youth Leadership Academy
	3-8-007	Furlough Regulations Youth Leadership Academy

3-8-017      Counseling vs. Therapy Appropriate Techniques for  
                         Probation Staff Youth Leadership Academy

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**APPROVED BY:**