

COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SUPPORT JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUNG PEOPLE
RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY

Acknowledgements

This is a supplementary presentation to [Collaborating for Successful Reentry: A Practical Guide to Support Justice-Involved Young People Returning to the Community.](#)

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Introduction

Every year, thousands of young people in the U.S. are released from juvenile correctional institutions and face immediate challenges reintegrating into their community.

- **During a period of confinement/incarceration, youth are:**
 - Disconnected from school community and extracurricular activities
 - Disconnected from family, friends, and community support system
- **Reentry support, which must be part of the entire institutional process, includes:**
 - Aftercare planning
 - Family engagement
 - Connection to community supports and mentors
 - Workforce and educational preparation

This guide lays out information for practitioners to meet the needs of young people reentering the community, to help remove barriers to success, and to increase young people's chances for more positive outcomes.

Doing Less Harm, More Good

- Practitioners need to thoroughly **identify youth needs** before providing any services, supports, or treatment interventions.
- Practitioners should adopt a **strengths-based** and restorative lens rather than correctional lens.
- Services and supports should draw upon and leverage **community-based and research-based resources**.

Young people coming back into the community have needs that fall along **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**.

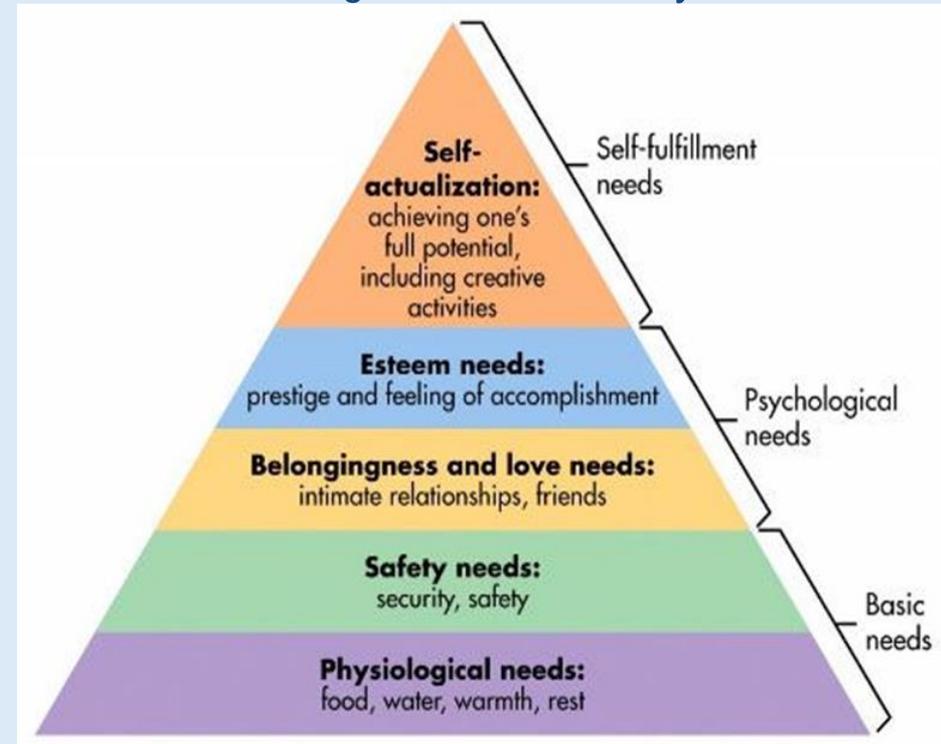


Image Source: Simply Psychology,
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

Identifying Needs: Engaging Youth and their Family

The *individualized* needs of a young person must be considered when developing reentry supports. The youth and their family should be meaningfully engaged in the process.



A youth's needs are different from the services and supports they receive.

- Example: A youth is struggling academically.
 - **Specific need:** “to experience success in school”
 - **Individualized support:** Youth will attend tutoring sessions provided by a free afterschool program and family will designate a quiet space to study.

Note: the need is not “tutoring” or a “quiet study space” but an underlying need identified by the youth and their family.

Coordinated Care

Lack of coordination among service agencies and providers can overburden youths, resulting in inefficiencies and duplicative services.

JCRU Example:

- Reentry planning begins upon disposition
- Includes young person and family in every decision
- Blends together all service plans from all agencies with which the young person is involved
- When the youth reenters the community, there is a coordinated and comprehensive plan in place.



Strengths-Based Lens

Traditionally, justice-involved young people are approached by service providers with a **deficit orientation**. This focus on the negative can:

- Prevent us from recognizing any assets these young people have
- Minimize their sense of self-worth
- Lead to an emphasis on control, rather than skill-building and asset-development

Alternatively, the Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) perspective:

- Uses a trauma-informed lens
- Focuses on building skills rather than pathology and punishment

Practitioners should also incorporate:

- Restorative Justice principles and practices
- Cultural and Gender-Responsiveness

Positive Youth Justice (PYJ)

Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) blends research on adolescent development with Positive Youth Development (PYD) practices. It assumes that, like all youth, *justice-involved youth have strengths and pro-social qualities that can be enhanced, developed, and cultivated.*

One of the most important elements of PYJ programming is the **presence of a consistent, trusted and caring adult for the young person.**

Service providers and juvenile justice system personnel can be the caring, consistent adults needed by the youth they work with.

Practitioners should:

- Engage, interact, and support youth with compassion and respect.
- Assess youth's strengths, interests, aspirations, and resiliency factors— not just their needs.



PYJ efforts focus on six domains, defined by Jeffrey A. Butts of John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Positive Youth Justice (PYJ)

Changing the Frame			
ASSUMPTIONS	PRIMARY LENS		
	Youth as Victim	Youth as Villain	Youth as Resource
Origins of Most Delinquent Behavior	Symptom of underlying disturbance	Anti-social impulses, lack of restraint due to permissiveness and the absence of punishment	Normative response to adolescent needs for status, belonging, power & excitement, lack of empathy
How Delinquent Youth Compare with Other Adolescents	Fundamentally different in psychological and emotional makeup	Fundamentally different motivations and impulses toward deviant behavior	Largely similar to other adolescents but with fewer social assets
Delinquent Youth Capacity for Behavior Change	Incapable of conventional behavior without therapeutic interventions	Incapable of conventional behavior without strict discipline and the threat of punishment	Inherently capable of conventional behavior with sufficient access to supports and pro-social opportunities
Principal Intervention Strategy	Individual or family-based therapeutic treatment	Deterrence and retributive punishment	Skill development, attachment and engagement
Role of Treatment	Primary	Secondary	Secondary
Risks of Treatment	Could fail to address underlying cause(s)	Could delay or impede deterrence	Could introduce stigma or harm—i.e., iatrogenic effects

Source: Butts, J.A., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A.S. (2010). *Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.

Approach That Is Collaborative, Integrated, and Supported by Research

- **Community-Based**

- Services delivered in the community are more successful than those in custody.
- Services should be delivered where youth are most able to receive them (geographically, logistically, culturally.)

- **Inter-Agency Collaboration**

- Successful reentry planning requires mutually-respectful collaboration and coordination across public agencies and community organizations.
- Relationships between correctional agencies and community members and other community supports can improve outcomes.

- **Research-Informed**

- Traditional juvenile and criminal justice practices that isolate, shame, and punish individuals have every been supported by research.
- Quality programs and approaches that employ research-based principles, but are not deemed “evidence-based,” deserve recognition as models for reentry.

Key Domains of Reentry

Major Criminogenic Risk and Need Factors

RNR Literature

- Family relationships
- Social supports for crime (peers)
- Antisocial personality pattern
- Pro-criminal attitudes
- Substance abuse
- School/work
- Prosocial recreational activities

Barriers to Successful Reentry

The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

- Lack of housing options
- Gang affiliations and attendant racial tensions
- Mental health problems
- Substance abuse problems
- Lack of educational options
- Limited skills and education
- Lack of community supports and role models
- Institutional identity
- Legislative barriers that limit access to education, cash assistance, and public housing

Domains for Young People Reentering Community after Confinement

David Altschuler, Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies

- Family and living arrangements
- Peer groups and friends
- Mental, behavioral and physical health
- Substance abuse
- Education and schooling
- Vocational training and employment
- Leisure, recreation, and vocational interests

Key Domains of Reentry & Supports

Housing		Temporary Housing Assistance	Family Counseling & Reunification Parenting with Love and Limits	Independent Living Skills Training	Applying for Housing Programs	Long-Term Independent Housing First Place for Youth
Financial Wellness		Enrollment into Public Assistance Programs Safer Foundation	Direct Payment Programs Operation Peacemaker Fellowship	Extended Wraparound Services	Direct Financial Assistance	Trust Fund Accounts
Education		Returning to High School Arizona Detention Transition Project	Credit Recovery & High School Equivalency Exam	Adult Continuing Education Five Keys	Vocational Training & Community College	College Mentorship and Support Project Rebound
Employment		Job Skills Training Center for Employment Opportunities	Job Placement Assistance	Internships, Apprenticeships, Service-learning, & Subsidized Income YouthBuild	Career Mentorship	Entrepreneurial Support Project ReMADE

Key Domains of Reentry & Supports

Social-Emotional		Pro-social Activities & Social Skills Programs	Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions Thinking for a Change	Aggression Replacement Training	Mentoring Credible Messengers	Intensive Case Management
Mental Health		Culturally-Responsive Therapy	Trauma-Informed Group Treatment Seeking Safety	Outpatient Psychiatric Care	Residential Substance Abuse Treatment	Sex Offender Treatment
Legal Matters		Building Relationships for Youth's Defense	Assistance with Immigration Status Root & Rebound	Domestic Violence Legal Needs	Assistance with Civil Disputes Youth Represent	Assistance with Record Sealing & Expungement Project Clean Slate

Stability in Housing and Family

With stable housing, young people are better equipped to address other challenges in their lives.

Housing		Temporary Housing Assistance	Family Counseling & Reunification Parenting with Love and Limits	Independent Living Skills Training	Applying for Housing Programs	Long-Term Independent Housing First Place for Youth
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Housing needs for young people after a period of confinement or incarceration will vary:

- If family situations are accommodating, housing will not be a challenge.
- If **housing struggles** exist in the family, or if **instability of family relationships** makes returning to the family home a non-viable option, housing is an immediate need.

Without immediate housing support, young people are at grave **risk for homelessness**. Homelessness disrupts any other reentry plans, particularly as it pushes youths toward extra-legal survival behaviors.

Stability in Housing and Family

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Temporary Housing
- Supporting Family Reunification and Repairing Family Relationships
- Independent Living Skills
- Assistance Applying for Housing Programs
- Long-Term Independent Housing Assistance

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor the effectiveness of housing supports range from short-term quantifiable measures to long-term qualitative indicators. See practical guide for a list of potential data points practitioners can use to monitor success of housing stability.

- **Model Programs**

- Parenting with Love and Limits
- First Place for Youth

Financial Wellness and Income Support

With the elimination of the stressor of income, young people are better positioned to avoid criminal involvement and develop skills for long-term success.

Financial Wellness		Enrollment into Public Assistance Programs Safer Foundation	Direct Payment Programs Operation Peacemaker Fellowship	Extended Wraparound Services	Direct Financial Assistance	Trust Fund Accounts
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- Depending on the age and home situation of the young person, **income is typically a pressing and immediate need** for youth exiting the juvenile justice system.
- Most youth in the juvenile justice system **come from poverty**. Access to public assistance and food stamps may be limited for reentry youths to obtain depending on the offense they have been charged with.
- While sound employment is the most reliable source of income, **finding steady work can take time**, and some returning youth will require more immediate, temporary income sources to forestall re-engagement in crime.

Financial Wellness and Income Support

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Enrollment into Public Assistance Programs
- Direct Payment Programs Independent Living Skills
- Extending Wraparound Services
- Direct Financial Assistance
- Trust Fund Accounts

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor the effectiveness of income supports primarily address the question of whether or not youths were able to access the benefits for which they were eligible. See practical guide for a list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of income supports.

- **Model Programs**

- Safer Foundation
- Operation Peacemaker Fellowship

Education

With greater educational opportunity, young people can develop the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in work and life.

Education		Returning to High School	Credit Recovery & High School Equivalency Exam	Adult Continuing Education	Vocational Training & Community College	College Mentorship & Support
		Arizona Detention Transition Project		Five Keys		Project Rebound

- It is estimated that 20% of youth are **not enrolled in school** at the time they enter a juvenile facility.
- Between 30 and 60% of incarcerated youth are expected to have disabilities and require **special education services**.
- While exploring educational options for young people returning to their communities, the **youth's desires and interests** must be considered alongside their needs.
- Regardless of where the youth is on their educational path, can benefit from education that is supported to meet their individual desires and needs.

Education

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Re-Enrolling in High School
- High School Equivalency
- Adult Education/Literacy
- Vocational Training
- College

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor the effectiveness of educational supports depend on the educational path of the youth. See practical guide for a list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of educational supports.

- **Model Programs**

- Arizona Detention Transition Project (ADTP)
- Five Keys
- Project Rebound

Employment Readiness and Assistance

With support in developing employment readiness, young people are better equipped to counterbalance prejudice and successfully forge a satisfying professional path.

Employment		Job Skills Training Center for Employment Opportunities	Job Placement Assistance	Internships, Apprenticeships, Service-learning, & Subsidized Income YouthBuild	Career Mentorship	Entrepreneurial Support Project ReMADE
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Youth will have varying employment needs: full-time, part-time, internships and/or apprenticeships.

Justice-involved youth will face barriers to employment including:

- Lack of social networks that many young people rely on to get established in work
- Stigma of a criminal record, both internalized and experienced in employment bias.

They have many strengths in terms of employability as well, which may include:

- Experienced in code-switching, which can translate into customer relations skills.
- A sense of commerce through involvement in drug economies (sales skills, youth management techniques, light accounting, etc.)
- Keen sense of the law, creativity, enthusiasm, attention to detail, organization, and more.

Employment Readiness and Assistance

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Job Skills Training
- Job Placement Assistance
- Service-Learning, Internships & Apprenticeships
- Career Mentorship
- Entrepreneurial Support

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor the effectiveness of employment supports depend on the services the youth accesses. See practical guide for a list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of employment assistance.

- **Model Programs**

- Youth Build
- Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
- Project ReMADE

Social-Emotional Skills

By late adolescence, most young people have developed a strong sense of independence and healthy relationships with their parents, peers, and adults based on trust, empathy, self-disclosure, and loyalty.

Social-Emotional		Pro-social Activities & Social Skills Programs	Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions Thinking for a Change	Aggression Replacement Training	Mentoring Credible Messengers	Intensive Case Management
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- Poor social-emotional development is associated with a host of pro-criminal attitudes,
- Youth in reentry are still adolescents:
 - Many are experiencing “delayed emotional and cognitive development” largely because of trauma, emotional abuse, and early drug use.
 - Most of them “have never successfully used problem-solving or coping skills outside of the correctional setting.”
 - A large proportion of them “still have no adults in their lives to help them learn the skills they need to deal with everyday life challenges.”

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Social Emotional Learning Competencies	Corresponding Pro-Criminal Attitudes
Awareness of Self and Others	Lack of Empathy & Self-Regulation
Awareness of feelings: The capacity to accurately perceive and label one's feelings	Poor self-regulation
Management of feelings: The capacity to regulate one's feelings	Egocentrism
Constructive sense of self: The capacities to accurately perceive one's strengths and weaknesses and handle everyday challenges with confidence and optimism	Lack of empathy
Perspective taking: The intention to engage in safe and healthy behaviors and be honest and fair in dealing with others	Lack of respect for others
Respect for others: The capacity to accurately perceive the perspectives of others	Notions of entitlement
Positive Attitudes and Values	Rationalizations and Inability to Accept Responsibility
Personal responsibility: The intention to accept and appreciate individual and group differences and to value the rights of all people	Failure to accept responsibility
Social responsibility: The intention to contribute to the community and protect the environment	Attitudes, values, beliefs and rationalizations supportive of crime
	Rationalizations for harmful behavior
	Cognitive emotional states of anger
	Resentment and defiance
	Insensitivity to the impact of crime
Responsible Decision Making	Poor Decision-Making Skills
Problem identification: The capacity to identify situations that require a decision or solution and assess the associated risks, barriers, and resources	Weak self-control (impulsivity)
Social norm analysis: The capacity to critically evaluate social, cultural, and media messages pertaining to social norms and personal behavior	Short-term orientation
Adaptive goal setting: The capacity to set positive and realistic goals	Restlessly aggressive
Problem solving: The capacity to develop, implement, and evaluate positive and informed solutions to problems	Pleasure seeking
	Criminal identity
Social Interaction Skills	Poor Social Skills
Active listening: The capacity to attend to others both verbally and non-verbally to demonstrate to them that they have been understood	Hostile interpersonal relations
Expressive communication: The capacity to initiate and maintain conversations and to clearly express one's thoughts and feelings both verbally and nonverbally	Below average ability for verbal expression
Cooperation: The capacity to take turns and share in both pairs and group situations	Weak socialization
Negotiation: The capacity to consider all perspectives involved in a conflict in order to resolve the conflict peacefully and to the satisfaction of all involved	Irritable
Refusal: The capacity to make and follow through with clear "NO" statements, to avoid situations in which one might be pressured, and to delay acting in pressure situations until adequately prepared	
Help seeking: The capacity to identify the need for support and assistance and to access available assistance when it's offered	

Social-Emotional Skills

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Social Skills Programs
- Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions
- Aggression Replacement Training
- Mentoring
- Intensive Case Management

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

In what sort of social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies training program did the youth participate? Was it matched to the youth's specific needs? See practical guide for a full list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of social-emotional supports.

- **Model Programs**

- Thinking for a Change
- Credible Messenger Justice Center

Mental Health/Substance-Use/Trauma-Specific Services

With access to appropriate behavioral health services, young people are supported emotionally and can find safer strategies for coping with challenges.

Mental Health		Culturally-Responsive Therapy	Trauma-Informed Group Treatment <i>Seeking Safety</i>	Outpatient Psychiatric Care	Residential Substance Abuse Treatment	Sex Offender Treatment
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Trauma is prevalent among youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The trauma that many have experienced prior to confinement tends to be exacerbated by experiences they have while confined.

Commonly found mental health disorders in justice-involved youth include:

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders (panic, generalized anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, etc.)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Bipolar disorder
- Psychotic disorders
- Disruptive behavior disorders (oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, etc.)
- Substance use disorders

Mental Health, Substance-Use, and Trauma-Specific Services

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Culturally-Responsive Therapy
- Group Treatment
- Outpatient Psychiatric Care
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Sex Offender Treatment

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor the effectiveness of behavioral health supports should vary based on the behavioral needs of youths. See practical guide for a list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of mental health, substance-use, and trauma-specific supports.

- **Model Programs**

- Seeking Safety

Legal Matters

With access to legal counsel, young people can address additional barriers which might otherwise derail their progress.

Legal Matters		Building Relationships for Youth's Defense	Assistance with Immigration Status Root & Rebound	Domestic Violence Legal Needs	Assistance with Civil Disputes Youth Represent	Assistance with Record Sealing & Expungement Project Clean Slate
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Practitioners working to support successful reentry for youth will need to **connect youth to legal service agencies** with the expertise and credentials required to provide counsel and advocacy for their legal needs which include, but go beyond, juvenile and criminal court matters.

Justice-involved young people are **more likely** than other young people in the community to:

- Come from marginalized communities
- Be coping with poverty
- Be pregnant or parenting

Legal Matters

- **Spectrum of Supports**

- Defense
- Immigration
- Domestic violence
- Civil disputes
- Record sealing & expungement

- **Anticipated Outcomes**

The outcomes that should be measured to monitor how effective legal supports have been range primarily focus on whether the youth was able to access legal services. See practical guide for a full list of potential data points for practitioners to use to monitor the success of legal supports.

- **Model Programs**

- Clean Slate
- Youth Represent Legal Services
- Root & Rebound

Conclusion

Young people who are returning to the community after a time of confinement or incarceration will likely face a number of barriers.

- Interruptions in education, adverse childhood experiences, and the **trauma of justice involvement** itself can give many returning youth a sense that the cards are stacked against them.
- Practitioners supporting justice-involved young people are uniquely-equipped and well-positioned to help them **identify, cultivate, and leverage their strengths.**

Every young person, justice-involved or not, has something that energizes him, something she's good at, something that can be built upon to motivate him or her toward larger aspirations and goals.

Conclusion

Successful juvenile reentry support requires:

- Commitment to a **strengths-based approach**
- Recognition of the **value of a lighter touch**
- Willingness to **empower youth to be the authors of a better story for themselves.**
- **Youth and their families must be listened to** at all points in the reentry process, from policy advocacy to program development to service implementation.
 - Youth may feel more motivated to achieve the goals they set, and empowered to independently achieve future goals.
 - Family's role as a support and their influence on the youth's behaviors is key to successful reentry.
 - Juvenile justice policies, reentry service development, and program designs should be informed by those directly affected-- youth and their families--in order to ensure they are properly served.

Culture of Collaboration

- Practitioners should **engage youth and their families** as partners in the process for aftercare and reentry planning.
- Practitioners should try to get a sense from the youth of **all the agencies and systems** that consider him or her to be their client.
- Practitioners must ensure that all agency's **plans are complementary** and that the youth is not being pulled in multiple directions.
- To the extent possible, a **community-based agency should be the primary contact and broker of services**, rather than a correctional one, to minimize the youth's risk of being pulled back under the authority of a correctional body or institution.

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