

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Baseline

Name of Program and Service: Abraxas I-IORP and STEP-Thinking My Way to Freedom
Cohort Total: 53 SPEP ID: 112-T01
Selected Timeframe: Nov. 17, 2015-Oct. 24, 2016
Date(s) of Interview(s): Jun. 9, 2016, Sep. 16, 2016
Lead County & SPEP Team Representatives: Angela Work, McKean Co. & Shawn Peck, EPISCenter
Person Preparing Report: Shawn Peck & Angela Work

Description of Service: *This should include a **brief** overview of the service within the context of the program, the location and if community based or residential. Indicate the type of youth referred, how the service is delivered, the purpose of service and any other **relevant** information to help the reader understand the SPEP service type classification. (350 character limit)*

The Abraxas I Intensive Open Residential Program (IORP) is a 12-bed, open residential program that provides staff secure / intensive programming for male adolescents between the ages of 13 to 18. This highly structured, staff-secure residential program provides individualized treatment for youth with diverse needs directly impacting their delinquency issues, and as a result, may have demonstrated resistance toward other treatment programs. Abraxas uses a strengths-based approach, which focuses on intensive clinical programming, evidence-based curricula, personal character development, and specific counseling to remedy family deficits. The program is designed as an alternative to secure placement. Utilizing a cognitive behavioral model, the Intensive Open Residential Program implements a strong emphasis on Aggression Replacement Training and Balanced and Restorative Justice.

The Abraxas I Social Training and Education Program (STEP) is a 14 bed, open residential program that provides social skill development and substance abuse education/prevention services to male adolescents between the ages of 13 to 18. The STEP program enables youth to transition within the Abraxas I continuum of services on the Marienville, PA campus. Utilizing a cognitive behavioral model and a trauma-informed care approach, STEP places a strong emphasis on life skill development and Balanced and Restorative Justice. A three phase clinical system provides clear and obtainable treatment objectives to assist the client in navigating through their individual treatment goals.

Thinking My Way to Freedom is a group curriculum developed by the Abraxas Training Institute. It is based on principles of cognitive behavioral therapy. Other treatment modalities are incorporated, including Rational Emotive Therapy (Ellis) and Criminal Personality Theory (Yochelson and Samenow). In a group format, facilitators educate youth on the cognitive model (i.e., thoughts effect emotions, which influences behaviors) and distorted thinking. Youth are exposed to various "thinking errors" and correctives to such thinking errors. "Thinking Groups" are facilitated weekly for one-hour in an open group format; group size is typically 12 youth. Handouts are provided as necessary for effective group facilitation.

The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Group Counseling

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? No

If so, what is the Service type? There is no qualifying supplemental service

Was the supplemental service provided? n/a Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 30

Total Points Earned: 30 Total Points Possible: 35

2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training and supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Earned: 5 Total Points Possible: 20

3. **Amount of Service:** Score was derived from examination of weeks and hours each youth in the cohort received the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP service categorization. Each SPEP service type has varying amounts of duration and dosage. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 0

Points received for Dosage or Number of Hours: 0

Total Points Earned: 0 Total Points Possible: 20

4. **Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

45 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

14 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 8 points

Total Points Earned: 18 Total Points Possible: 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 53 total points awarded out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP therapeutic service. (eg: individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.

Program Optimization Percentage: 56% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (eg: individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research)

The SPEP and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service feedback report, and these recommendations are the focus of the performance improvement plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the local juvenile court. The recommendations for this service included in the feedback report are:

Thinking My Way to Freedom could improve its capacity for recidivism reduction through:

1. Regarding Quality of Service:
 - a. Develop a routine schedule to inquire about updates to the manual
 - b. Develop a process to monitor the delivery of this service
 - c. Develop a scheduled process for the supervisor to observe the delivery of this service
 - d. Ensure the supervisor provides written feedback for those who deliver this service
 - e. In annual performance reviews, include information specific to the delivery of this service
 - f. Develop a policy that outlines how to prevent drift from occurring while delivering this service
 - i. Ensure that the organizational response to drift includes specific action steps for the agency to take to avoid drift, an “if-then” approach
 - ii. A progressive supervision process and response plan
2. Regarding Amount of Service:
 - a. Make modifications to provide longer service participation, allowing for alignment with research supported amounts
 - b. Improve communication with JPO from referring counties to better match research recommendations for targeted amount of service.

The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

Service Score Results: Reassessment 1

SPEP™ ID and Time: 112-T02

Agency Name: Abraxas Youth and Family Services - Abraxas -I

Program Name: Intensive Open Residential Program (IORP); Social Training and Education Program (STEP)

Service Name: Thinking My Way to Freedom

Cohort Total: 52, 49 for Risk

Timeframe of Selected Cohort: Began the service on or after 2/21/2018 and ended the service on or before 3/31/2020

Referral County(s): Adams (2); Allegheny (1); Bedford (1); Bucks (1); Butler (1); Clearfield (1); Columbia (1); Cumberland (1); Dauphin (3); Delaware (13); Erie (1); Franklin (1); Indiana (1); Jefferson (1); Lackawanna (1); Lawrence (1); Lehigh (10); Mifflin (1); Monroe (2); Montgomery (1); Northampton (1); Schuylkill (1); Washington (2); Wayne (1); Westmoreland (2)

Date(s) of Interview(s): Service Classification: 1/22/2020; Quality of Service Delivery Interview: 5/20/2020

Lead County: Montgomery

Probation Representative(s): Lisa Fetzer, Probation Officer, Montgomery County Juvenile Probation

EPIS Representative: Shannon O'Lone, SPEP™ Implementation Specialist

Description of Service:

Abraxas I, a division of Abraxas Youth and Family Services, is located in rural Marienville, PA and offers a variety of programs within the campus including: The Social Training and Education Program (STEP), The Intensive Open Residential Program (IORP), The Abraxas Residential Mental Health Services (ARMHS) Program and The Abraxas I Intensive Drug & Alcohol Treatment Programs. Abraxas I is a Sanctuary® Model affiliated program which provides guidance in support of a trauma informed, trauma sensitive culture by employing the Seven Commitments of the Sanctuary® Model, along with the Sanctuary® Toolkit. The focus of this report is on the Thinking My Way to Freedom service which is delivered in both the Intensive Open Residential Program (IORP) and The Social Training and Education Program (STEP). The Baseline SPEP assessment included youth from these programs. Similarly, for this SPEP Reassessment, youth have been included in the cohort from both programs described in detail below.

The Abraxas I Intensive Open Residential Program (IORP) is a 12-bed, open residential program that provides staff secure/intensive programming for male adolescents between the ages of 13 to 18. This highly structured, staff-secure residential program provides individualized treatment for youth with diverse needs directly impacting their delinquency issues, and as a result, may have demonstrated resistance toward other treatment programs. Abraxas I uses a strengths-based approach, which focuses on intensive clinical programming, evidence-based curricula, personal character development, and specific counseling to remedy family deficits. The program is designed as an alternative to secure placement. Utilizing a cognitive behavioral model, the Intensive Open Residential Program implements a strong emphasis on Aggression Replacement Training and Balanced and Restorative Justice.

The Abraxas I Social Training and Education Program (STEP) is a 14 bed, open residential program that provides social skill development and substance abuse education/prevention services to male adolescents between the ages of 13 to 18. The STEP program enables youth to transition within the Abraxas I continuum of services on the Marienville, PA campus. Utilizing a cognitive behavioral model and a trauma-informed care approach, STEP places a strong emphasis on life skill development and Balanced and Restorative Justice. A three-phase clinical system provides clear and obtainable treatment objectives to assist the client in navigating through their individual treatment goals.

Thinking My Way to Freedom is a group curriculum developed by the Abraxas Training Institute. It is based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Other treatment modalities are incorporated including Rational Emotive Therapy (Ellis) and Criminal Personality Theory (Yochelson and Samenow). In a group format, facilitators educate youth on the cognitive model (i.e. thoughts effect emotions, which influences behaviors, and distorted thinking). Youth are exposed to various "thinking errors" and correctives to such thinking errors. "Thinking Groups" are facilitated three times per week for one hour in an open group format; group size is typically 12 youth in IORP program, and 14 youth in the STEP program. Handouts are provided as necessary for effective group facilitation.

The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

1. **SPEP™ Service Type:** Group Counseling

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? No

If so, what is the Service Type? There is no qualifying supplemental service

Was the supplemental service provided? N/A **Total Points Possible for this Service Type:** 30

Total Points Received: 30 **Total Points Possible:** 35

2. **Quality of Service:** Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training, staff supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Received: 5 **Total Points Possible:** 20

3. Amount of Service: Score was derived by calculating the total number of weeks and hours received by each youth in the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP™ service categorization. Each SPEP™ service type has varying amounts of duration and contact hours. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks: 4
Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours: 6

Total Points Received: 10 **Total Points Possible:** 20

4. Youth Risk Level: The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

45 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points
16 in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

Total Points Received: 20 **Total Points Possible:** 25

Basic SPEP™ Score: 65 total points received out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP™ therapeutic service. (e.g. individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.

Program Optimization Percentage: 68% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (e.g. individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research.)

The SPEP™ and Performance Improvement

The intended use of the SPEP™ is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service Feedback Report, and these recommendations are the focus of the Performance Improvement Plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the juvenile probation department.

1. Regarding Quality of Service Delivery:

a. Written Protocol:

- i. Consolidate existing resources to develop an overarching written protocol streamlined process/ to describe service delivery
- ii. Within the written protocol, clearly describe how the Thinking My Way to Freedom manual is to be reviewed/updated at pre-determined time frames (i.e. internally, on a yearly basis)

b. Staff Training:

- i. Develop a specialized training for delivery of the Thinking My Way to Freedom curriculum
- ii. Within the written protocol, develop a process to document that staff delivering the service received the required specialized training
- iii. Develop booster training to support service delivery specific to Thinking My Way to Freedom
- iv. Develop a process to document that the supervisor has been trained to deliver the Thinking My Way to Freedom curriculum

c. Staff Supervision:

- i. Within the written protocol, identify a single mechanism for supervisors to monitor the service for fidelity and quality of service delivery across all forms
- ii. Within the written protocol, create a scheduled process for supervisors to monitor service delivery
- iii. Ensure written feedback regarding service delivery is provided to individuals delivering the service
- iv. Include service-specific feedback in annual performance evaluations

d. Organizational Response to Drift:

- i. Develop a written policy that outlines how to prevent drift from occurring while delivering this service, possibly utilizing tracking sheets
- ii. Within the written response to drift policy, develop a process to document the utilization of the drift policy
- iii. Ensure that the organizational response to drift policy includes specific action steps for the agency to take to avoid drift, including an “if-then” approach or specific corrective action steps to address departure from the fidelity and quality of service delivery
- iv. Develop a process for staff to review the data collected and use the data to adapt or improve service delivery consistently across all programs

2. Regarding Amount of Service:

- a. Improve communication with JPO from referring counties to better match research recommendations for targeted amount of service and appropriate length of stay
- b. Make modifications to provide longer service participation, allowing alignment with research supported amounts of 24 weeks and 40 hours

3. Regarding Risk Level of Youth Served:

- a. Maintain collaboration between juvenile probation and Abraxas I to consider the appropriate risk level for each youth
- b. Maintain collaboration between juvenile probation and Abraxas I to consider each youth’s responsibility factors during treatment