

Youth Competency Assessment (YCA)

[Short Version]

Introduction: *It is likely that you will begin the interview by conducting usual Department/Court business: meeting the youth and any other people who are present, introducing yourself, and providing some information about why the youth is there, what they can expect from their visit today and their involvement with you overall, and what expectations the Department/Court has of them. The YCA has the following purposes and goals: 1) To start the process of understanding harm done and how to repair it, 2) To get to know the youth and her/his strengths, and 3) To decide together on competency areas to develop or explore.*

Section A: Repairing Harm and Developing Positive Norms and Values

** What personal strengths does the youth have that they can use to make up for past mistakes? **

- a. Where have you learned about how to decide right from wrong (e.g., parent, teacher)? What are some examples of what they taught you?
- b. Think about what got you in trouble this last time. Who did it hurt? Is there anything you've already done to make up for your actions? What (else) you could do?
- c. What could you do to show people that you'll make different decisions in the future? How would these choices benefit you?

Section B: Creating a Healthy Identity

** What positive skills and qualities does the youth have that will help them succeed? What behaviors does the youth exhibit that reflect a positive identity? **

Sample Questions:

- d. How do you like to spend your free time?
Hobbies? Sports? Music/Movies? (These questions look for engagement in productive activities)
- e. Are you going to school or working anywhere (or have you ever)? What types of things did you enjoy? What were you good at?
- f. What types of skills do you have? (This area might need probing and you might need to provide some suggestions)
[Follow up with...How do you think these skills will help you in your life?]
- g. One of the things we'll be doing together is making some plans for the next few months. What goals would you like to try to achieve in the next _____ (month? 3 months? etc.)? What areas would you like to explore?

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Youth Name/I.D. # _____

Date: __/__/____

Counselor/Staff Name/I.D. # _____

h. How would you describe yourself?

i. What is something you like about yourself? (Probe for something more than the superficial)

Section C: Connecting with Family, Peers, and Community

** Are there positive people in the youth's life who can serve as a resource for them? **

j. Who do you spend most of your time with? (Looking for a connection with adults, positive role models)

k. Describe the people you feel most safe with... Who are they? If there isn't someone, what are some ways we could help find someone? What is it that makes you feel safe?

l. Who in your life helps you reach your goals or explore your interests? If there isn't someone, what are some ways we could help find someone?

m. Name some people that you respect or that you see doing things you like or appreciate (e.g., teacher, coach, musician, doctor, neighbor). What kinds of things do they do? Who in your family do you admire most? (Why?) Which friend do you admire most? (Why?)

n. Tell me about a time when someone did something nice for you, or helped you out, or gave you something you needed. Why did the person do it?

o. Tell me about a time you did something nice for someone else, or you helped them out, or you gave them something they needed. What types of things do you enjoy doing for others?

p. Who counts on you? [Follow up with...What do you do for them?]

Note: If youth is unable to provide positive information about him/herself, it may indicate depression or another underlying issue. Please screen or refer for screening as necessary.

Youth Name/I.D. # _____

Date: __/__/____

Counselor/Staff Name/I.D. # _____

YCA Summary and Plan

1. **Youth's skills/interests/strengths/resources** (can include community or cultural strengths or supports):

2. **Positive/supportive adult(s)** in youth's life (people who can support the youth to develop skills/competencies and help youth reach her/his goals):

3. **Healthy identity:** Involvement in positive activities or pursuit of positive interests; faith/spirituality/cultural activities; opportunities to be a helper or leader.

4. **Community connections:** Engagement with educational/vocational activities or involvement in any community groups or resources; mentors; faith/spiritual links; relationships with positive adults or peers.

5. **Repairing harm/healing; Pro-social norms/values:** Ways the youth has taken responsibility for his/her actions; understood the impact of his/her behavior; made efforts to repair harm, rebuild trust, contribute to the community.

Goals:

(Competency development/skill building areas, such as mentoring others or being mentored, education or career, family or peer relationships, repairing harm, exploring identity, building community connections; make sure to include review dates for all goals; goals are specific/simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, time framed)

6. **Short-term goals** (within the next month, or less):

7. **Long-term goal(s)/hope for future** (within the next year, or more):

8. **Youth-generated goal(s):**

Now use this information in designing your case plan.