**About Evidence Generation**

*Evidence Generation* is the mission of the Graduate Research Fellowship Program in the Research and Evaluation (R&E) Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Graduate Research Fellows from the R&E Center work with affiliated justice agencies in New York City to identify, confront, and resolve the challenges that service providers often face as they build the data resources and administrative procedures required to generate compelling evaluation evidence. The goal of the program is not to conduct evaluations, but to prepare and empower agencies to generate credible evidence of their effectiveness.

**About the Graduate Research Fellowship Program**

The Graduate Research Fellows that work with Evidence Generation are funded by the Pinkerton Foundation of New York, through the Pinkerton Fellowship Initiative at John Jay College, with added support from Mr. Jack Rudin and the Rudin family foundations in New York. Graduate Research Fellows work in teams to consult with nonprofit community-based organizations in the New York City justice sector. Research Fellows receive guidance and training in applied evaluation skills from John Jay faculty and staff and then apply these skills in building the analytic capacities of participating agencies. Fellows participate in workshops with the agencies involved in the initiative and assist in the formation of each agency’s evaluation strategy. The purpose of the Fellowship program is to help agencies grow the skills needed to develop their own evidence base.

Rudin Fellows and Pinkerton Fellows work actively with each selected agency to identify any operational or managerial challenges that could limit the agency’s ability to participate in rigorous outcome evaluation projects. The Fellows then work collaboratively with the agency staff to begin building and implementing the analytic resources necessary for evaluation efforts. Typically, this includes creating or refining an agency’s theory of change and a conceptual framework or logic model that can be used to specify a program’s key components and their relationship to desired outcomes at the client, family, and community level.

Next, the Fellows focus on the complex challenges each agency faces in developing accurate but flexible data collection methods to support future evaluation efforts. Depending on the program involved, agencies may work to improve their access to administrative information systems, client surveys, or even interviews when those are necessary to collect the client-specific and often subjective data elements required to test the long-term impact of an intervention.

Finally, Graduate Research Fellows cooperate with agency staff to develop a plan for implementing whatever research designs each agency chooses to use in evaluating the effectiveness of existing or future intervention programs. As in all human services systems, the most desirable research designs involve randomization and experimental comparison strategies, but Fellows also work with agencies to take advantage of reasonable alternatives to randomization, including the wide variety of quasi-experimental evaluation designs.
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Executive Summary

This work plan was drafted specifically for the youth justice programs at Good Shepherd Services, to serve as a tool for continued use in aiding court-involved youth.

MISSION: A key part of the GSS mission is to surround at-risk New York City youth and their families with a web of support that promotes self-sufficiency.

THEORY OF CHANGE: The LIFE program is based on a theory of change that incarceration and removal of youth from their home negatively affect their physical and psychological well-being, academic progress, and emotional development. The LIFE program provides services focusing on education, family, and community engagement designed to provide juveniles with more structured time for pro-social activities.

LOGIC MODEL: Theories of change guide logic models, linking an agency’s program activities, client performance, and longer term outcomes. The GSS logic models illustrate how trained LIFE caseworkers provide services that fit the unique needs of the youth, such as general group session. These services help youth improve their self-identity and sense of future, making them less likely to violate probation and be placed out of home.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Graduate Research Fellows advise conducting process and outcome evaluations. Comparison strategies specific to GSS are also provided as a method of evaluating program effectiveness. The Graduate Research Fellows recommend that Good Shepherd Services standardize their criteria for including and excluding clients, develop comparison strategies, collect data needed to conduct process and outcome evaluations, and follow up with individuals who have completed programming.
**Introduction**

In this work plan, we present the various features of an evaluation plan. More details of each element will be provided in two supporting documents, an Evaluation Guidebook and a Follow-up Guidebook.

**Good Shepherd Services Mission Statement:** The mission of Good Shepherd Services is to surround at-risk New York City youth and their families with a web of supports that promote a safe passage to self-sufficiency. To achieve our mission, we lead in the development of innovative youth development programs; provide quality, effective services that strengthen participants’ connections with family, school, and community; and advocate on their behalf for broader change.

One of Good Shepherd Services’ major program areas is youth justice. Some of these programs are Learning Independence For Empowerment (LIFE), Non-Secure Detention (NSD), and Close-to-Home Non-Secure Placement (C2H NSP). These programs use evidence-supported approaches in their program activities. They provide youth with wrap-around, strength-based services that fit the unique needs of each individual. All of these programs seek to apply the “youth as resource” approach. Each of these programs has its own intended impact.

**LIFE:** To divert youth who are highly at risk of violating their probation from being placed out of home, improve their family connection, increase school engagement and involvement in community services, and develop a supportive network.

**Non-Secure-Detention:** To provide youth who are placed in the custody of the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) a structured, safe, and nurturing environment that increases positive behavior, teaches emotional management skills, and fosters social responsibility.

**Close-to-Home Non-Secure Placement:** To help youth who are placed in non-secure placement at the disposition of a family court delinquency case improve their social and behavioral functioning, family connection, and family and community reintegration, including community education reentry.

**GSS Youth Justice Programs**

The LIFE program began in 2011 and serves youth who are at high risk of violating their probation and being placed out of home. LIFE caseworkers conduct group sessions, home and school visits, and family meetings, as well as facilitate educational and court advocacy, trips, recreation, and community-building activities. Good Shepherd Services also has contracts with Teen Choice and Council for Unity to provide group sessions and prevention workshops on teen pregnancy and gang involvement. Good Shepherd Services
operates two LIFE programs, one in the Bronx and the other in Brooklyn. Both provide services to males and females between the ages of 12-17. Both programs are similar in their activities and intended outcome. However the Bronx LIFE program operates under the Sanctuary Model, while the Brooklyn program is planning to use Solution Based Casework.

When the Graduate Research Fellows visited Good Shepherd Services Brooklyn LIFE facility, we were greeted by an administrative assistant who was seated behind a desk to the right of the second floor entrance. The interior of the facility was bright, well-lit, and the walls were painted white and purple, exuding a welcome and comfortable atmosphere. The waiting area is visible from the reception area, which is convenient as this is where most youth wait for programming to begin. The staff offices are located down the hall to the right of the reception area. There are also two large classrooms, located to the right and down the hall from the waiting area. The classrooms are filled with at least 20 desks each, a chalk board, and a few tables. Their walls are painted white and purple with educational posters hung on the walls. Around the corner from the classrooms are the bathrooms and a small kitchenette area.

The Graduate Research Fellows also visited the Bronx LIFE program, which is located on Burnside Avenue. The space on Burnside Avenue houses the Bronx LIFE and the Foster Care programs. Good Shepherd Services is currently looking for a new space for both programs. Upon our arrival, we were shown to a conference room with seating for at least thirteen people. We also saw the facility’s lobby, central space, and classrooms. There was sanctuary model-related décor throughout the facility, including a “Welcome to Sanctuary” banner in the lobby, the “Safety Plan Challenge” banner in the central space, student drawings, and posters. The classroom and central space were well-decorated and furnished with couches, tables, and chairs.

Good Shepherd Services also currently operates three Non-Secure Detention Facilities (one of which is set to be converted into a Close-to-Home Non-Secure Placement Facility). The Non-Secure Detention program began in 1993, with the current locations opening in 2004. The Graduate Research Fellows visited one of these facilities, Mandela House, a three story single home located on University Avenue in the West Bronx. It serves males age 17 and under. The usual stay at Mandela House is two weeks but can last up to several months. Upon our arrival, we met with the residents who had just finished a group meeting. Two residents then offered to give us a tour of the facility. As the tour commenced, our guides described their typical day at Mandela House (e.g., rules, chores, meals, entertainment, etc.) and gave us examples from their Safety Cards. All residents seemed excited to see us, and we were invited to watch them play basketball for about twenty minutes. The youth interacted well together, refereeing themselves and taking turns amicably.

At the time of this writing, Good Shepherd Services is preparing to open two Close-to-Home Non-Secure Placement (C2H NSP) facilities in Brooklyn. One facility will serve
males, and the other will serve females. All C2H NSP residents will have been placed with ACS for non-secure placement at the conclusion of a family court delinquency case. C2H NSP youth are expected to be between the ages of 15-17. Good Shepherd Services is expecting to serve approximately 40 youths a year, with an average length of stay of seven months. These facilities will use the Sanctuary Model and will also incorporate the Missouri Model approach. This is an evidence-supported approach developed for working with juvenile justice-involved youth in residential settings. It centers on group process, requiring individual residents to be accountable to each other and, as a group, to hold each member of the group accountable to the group. In keeping with the Missouri Model approach, activities at the C2H NSPs will be highly structured and will include education, career, vocational, and youth development, family visits, family work and support, and development of community connections. The C2H NSP programs will also provide social work, mental health, and medical services. These facilities are scheduled to open in September or October of 2013.

**Evidence-Based Programming**

Although a wide variety of interventions are available to programs that serve justice-involved youth, not all programs are *evidence-based*. To be considered evidence-based, programs and practices must have been empirically tested according to certain standards. Several experimental or quasi-experimental studies, carried out at different sites, must demonstrate significant improvements in client outcomes that are consistent with the articulated goals of the program or practice.

Programs and practices that do not meet the criteria for evidence-based, but have some supporting evidence of effectiveness, are considered *research-based*. For example, a program that has been found to be effective in one or two empirical studies would be considered research-based, but not evidence-based. Based on preliminary information, *promising* programs and practices appear to have the potential to become research-based. Finally, programs and practices that have been empirically tested and failed to show any positive outcomes or caused adverse outcomes are considered *ineffective*.

Implementing evidence-based programs is important for several reasons.

1. Evidence-based programs and practices have been shown to be reliable interventions for reducing crime among youth.

2. Evidence-based programs and practices are more cost-effective than other

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programs because they are more likely to produce positive outcomes that cost the
state less in the long run. For example, lowering recidivism among justice-involved
youth saves money on out-of-home placements and probation or parole officers.

3. Funding agencies are more likely to give money to programs that use evidence-
based programs and practices, or can at least demonstrate a plan for implementing
evidence-based practices in the future.

4. Legislators in some states are beginning to require that social service agencies use
evidence-based or research-based programs and practices.

For these reasons, the Graduate Research Fellows recommend using evidence-based
programs and practices whenever possible, but it is equally important for youth-serving
agencies to pursue research-based and promising intervention strategies that fit their
theory of change and their intervention philosophy. Good Shepherd Services aims to
incorporate best practices into their youth justice programing. Many of the models they
have adapted can be considered research-based or promising, such as the Sanctuary
Model, the Missouri Model, and Solution-Based Casework. When such models are used,
however, they should be implemented with data-collection routines that can generate new
evidence about their effectiveness and impact.

Sanctuary Model

Research has shown that traumatic experiences early in life have a negative impact on
child development by increasing the risk of mental health issues and the likelihood of
antisocial behavior. The Sanctuary Model has been used as a therapeutic treatment
option for youth in residential programs who have experienced traumatic events. The
Sanctuary Model strives to create a non-violent and democratic therapeutic community
in which both staff and clients are equally responsible for creating a socially responsive
environment that fosters growth and change. The recovery process is based on four steps
which emphasize the safety of youth, their emotional management, the recognition of
the losses they have faced, and a focus on the future that awaits them (known as S.E.L.F.
within the Sanctuary Model).

California’s Evidenced-Based Clearinghouse conducted an analysis of the effectiveness
of the Sanctuary Model. Researchers rated it as promising based on the small number of
available studies on the model. At least one study used some form of a control group and
found the Sanctuary Model to be better than an appropriate comparison practice.

MISSOURI MODEL

The “Missouri Model” is the name commonly used to refer to the model of juvenile corrections implemented by Missouri’s Division of Youth Services (DYS). This model is said to be more effective than others in reducing recidivism and cost, as well as increasing youths’ safety, educational progress, and transition back into the community. There are six characteristics of this model which separate it from traditional models of juvenile corrections:

1. Small facilities that do not resemble traditional prisons and are located near the youths’ families;
2. Group treatment and placement in small, cohesive groups;
3. Safe environments through constant supervision and supportive relationships;
4. Instruction on academic, pre-vocational, and communication skills;
5. Family involvement in both the treatment and aftercare processes; and
6. Comprehensive aftercare plans, including support and supervision.

In our review of previous studies, we discovered that researchers have noted a lack of external and process evaluations of the Missouri Model. One evaluation in California found that the youth participating in a program that used a modified version of the Missouri Model had better outcomes than youth participating in the standard program.

SOLUTION-BASED CASEWORK

Solutions-Based Casework (SBC) was designed for the public child welfare system. As a child welfare practice model, it draws from three theoretical frameworks: family life cycle theory, relapse prevention theory, and solution-focused family therapy. SBC is based on the following assumptions about casework:

1. Full partnership with the family is critical for each case.
2. Partnership for protection should focus on the patterns of the family’s everyday life.
3. Solutions should target the prevention skills needed to reduce the risk in those everyday situations.

3. Adapted from: Arifuku, Davis & Linda (2009); Huebner (2012); Mendel (2010); and Nelson, Jolivette, Leone & Mathur (2010).

Research on SBC shows that it can help caseworkers and families stay engaged with case planning and requirements. Moreover, SBC has been shown to have positive impacts on several outcomes, such as learning readiness, recidivism, child-safety, permanency, and well-being.

**Theory of Change**

A theory of change, which is sometimes called a program theory, is a set of testable propositions about how a program affects a set of conditions or behaviors. The goal of a theory of change is to describe the process by which change is produced, articulating how and why a set of activities is expected to affect participants. To accomplish this goal, theories of change must be plausible, doable, testable, and meaningful. A properly developed theory of change should guide a process of data collection and measurement that can demonstrate that a program’s intervention, rather than some outside condition, led to a change in the participant.

An effective theory of change is based on research and best practices, with strategies designed to address a specific problem in a specific context. Theories of change should be developed by systematically organizing what is known about a particular problem and what a program is designed to accomplish. Four basic steps can be used to develop a theory of change:

1. State the problem that needs to be addressed
2. Identify the program’s goals and objectives in addressing the problem
3. Specify what actions will be taken to achieve those goals and objectives
4. Clarify the rationale for taking those actions

**Good Shepherd Services Theories of Change**

Based on the information we have gathered, the Graduate Research Fellows developed the following theories of change for Good Shepherd Services:

**Brooklyn and Bronx LIFE**

Youth who are incarcerated are removed from their home and school, which can negatively affect their physical and psychological well-being, academic progress, and emotional development. This is especially true in New York City, where juvenile correctional facilities are often located far from the juveniles’ home. The LIFE

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program provides youth who are at risk of violating their probation, and are facing out-of-home-placement, with a safe place to receive a range of services that fit the unique needs of each juvenile.

The Bronx LIFE program offers similar services but uses the Sanctuary Model.

**Non-Secure Detention**

Youths who are detained away from their home need a safe, structured, and nurturing environment while awaiting family court outcomes. Good Shepherd Services provides short term care for youth 17 years old or younger who are placed in the custody of the New York City Administration for Children’s Services. The Sanctuary Model provides the framework for offering individualized services, such as counseling, visitation, group meetings, education support and tutoring, and behavioral interventions. These services are designed to increase positive behavior, teach emotional management skills, and foster social responsibility.

**Close-to-Home Non-Secure Placement**

Good Shepherd Services has not yet implemented this program. Youth will be placed in non-secure placement for an average of seven months as the disposition of a family court case. This program will operate under the framework of the Sanctuary Model and will include services adapted from the Missouri Model. These services include clinical assessment and treatment, medical services, case management, permanency planning, community-building events, educational support/tutoring, family visits, family work and support, and home visits. These services are designed to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral functioning of youth, as well as improve educational engagement, strengthen family connection, and successful family and community reintegration.

**Logic Models**

Logic models present a visual depiction of a program’s underlying program theory, illustrating how the activities of a specific program lead to certain outcomes. As such, logic models can be useful tools for determining which aspects of a program achieve the desired outcomes and why these program aspects are effective. Content of the logic model will depend on the purpose, context, and audience of the program. Logic models usually present Inputs (resources), Activities (services offered), Outputs (measurable products of the delivery of services), Outcomes (short and long-term individual results of participation.

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6. Adapted from: Maxfield (2001); Taylor-Powell & Henert (2008); W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2004); Wilder (2009).
in services), and Impacts (long-term community and/or systemic change). Logic models are most useful when they can be linked to specific evaluation measures.

When designing logic models, it is often helpful to begin with a series of “if/then” statements as a means of clarifying how the goals of the program can be achieved through the proposed activities. For example, if Good Shepherd Services has trained caseworkers to provide services that fit the unique needs of the youth (resources), then caseworkers can offer educational advocacy and conduct school visits (activities). If caseworkers provide these services (activities), then Good Shepherd Services can expect the youth to be enrolled in and attend school (outcome), making them more likely to increase their school engagement (impact). This can also serve as a means of designing activities that will lead to outcomes the program can realistically achieve within the designated time.

Certain principles apply to all activities in Good Shepherd Services. These include: the Good Shepherd Services mission and values; youth and family development framework; and evidence-based practice. Good Shepherd Services has developed logic models for the NSD and LIFE programs. We have developed a draft of the Bronx and Brooklyn LIFE logic models that draw on the currently developed logic models, as well as our understanding of the program.
Evaluation

Program evaluation should be purposive (with specific goals in mind), analytic (following sound logic and reasoning), and empirical (based on actual data). Good Shepherd Services should follow a two-step process when evaluating one of the programs: first, they should conduct a process evaluation to make sure the program is doing what it says it is doing; second, they should conduct an outcome evaluation to see what effect the program has on its participants.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluations examine if the program is being implemented the way it was intended and assess the overall effectiveness of the program. Good process evaluations use data collected immediately after the program begins (e.g., participant demographic information and selection criteria), during the intervention (e.g., number of sessions offered and percent of youth attending sessions), and after the intervention (e.g., client satisfaction ratings). For example, if youth who come to Good Shepherd Services’ LIFE program are not at a high risk of violating their probation and being placed out of their home, do not

7. Adapted from: Baranowski & Stables (2000); Bliss & Emshoff (2002); Maxfield (2001).
show up to the sessions that are offered, or are not engaged in the program, a process evaluation would indicate that LIFE is not being implemented as intended.

Process measures are indicators of program delivery that are used in process evaluations to determine the amount and quality of a specific type of activity and output. The most common type of process measure is a counting system, which quantifies how much of something is being administered. For example, Good Shepherd Services attempts to increase school engagement by doing school visits and providing educational advocacy. Recording the number of school visits and the percent of youth who are receiving educational advocacy may be used to measure program delivery. It is helpful to keep in mind that the outcome of an activity greatly depends on the process by which the activity is delivered.

Other types of process measures are more complex in nature because they require more than a tallying system. For Good Shepherd Services, these include the characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of individuals enrolled in the program. The quality of these measures can be measured directly or indirectly. If, for example, Good Shepherd Services wants to measure the behavior of clients, then clients can be directly observed by the evaluator. An indirect measure, on the other hand, would involve evaluators asking questions about the client’s behavior.

**Outcome Evaluation**

An outcome evaluation assesses the short and long-term results of a program’s activity or set of activities. Outcome measures are used to examine whether participants are improving as a result of the program or due to other outside factors. Outcomes are selected based on the goals of the organization. Examples of outcomes specific to Good Shepherd Services include:

1. Increased school engagement and involvement in community activities
2. Improved family connection and self-advocacy
3. Reduced involvement in criminal activity and the criminal justice system

Checklists are used to determine if the outcome measures used by a program fit the goals of the organization. A sample checklist for Good Shepherd Services will be created by the Graduate Research Fellows as part of the Evaluation Guidebook.

**Comparison Strategies**

Good Shepherd Services should use comparison strategies and follow-up techniques (discussed in the next section) to determine if their programs met expectations. Comparison groups create a frame of reference to assess improvement in participants and
program effectiveness. Good Shepherd Services can determine participant changes that are due to a specific program by comparing a group of Good Shepherd Services participants to a group of individuals who did not participate in the program (for example, a control group).

The comparison strategy most appropriate for Good Shepherd Services depends on the specific program. Each program serves different types of youth. For example, Good Shepherd Services is somewhat unique in the types of youth who participate in the LIFE program. Typically, the court-involved youth who participate in the LIFE program:

1. Are ages 12-17
2. Are at high risk of violating their probation
3. Are facing out-of-home placement
4. Cannot have serious mental health or substance abuse issues
5. Have previously participated in one or more other programs

These criteria are unique in that they serve a youth population more at risk than youth served in other programs. This presents some challenges for identifying an appropriate comparison strategy. For example, randomly assigning clients to a treatment or control group is not practical or feasible for Good Shepherd Services. However, it is still possible to develop comparison groups for Good Shepherd Services through methods like matching.

Most forms of comparison involve some type of matching, where the group receiving services and participating in program activities is compared to a group who has very similar social and criminal backgrounds, but 1) was not in the program and did not receive the intervention; 2) was in a different program; or 3) received less services and participated in less activities. The Graduate Research Fellows suggest six general comparison strategies that Good Shepherd Services can use to evaluate its various youth justice programs. The first three strategies would be easier to implement if Good Shepherd Services had better access to youth and criminal justice data, while the last three only require data that are already collected by Good Shepherd Services.

One general strategy would be to compare the outcomes of a group of youth who have participated in a Good Shepherd Services program to the outcomes of youth who have participated in other programs, as well as to youth who have received out-of-home placement. Evaluators can use statistical methods to identify these comparison groups from a database of court-involved youth by matching them to the Good Shepherd Services group on several relevant pretreatment characteristics, such as gender, age, race, criminal history, etc. This matching strategy requires extensive access to official criminal and youth justice data and may not be feasible at this time.
The second strategy would take advantage of the referral process used by Good Shepherd Services. Good Shepherd Services receives several referrals of court-involved youth throughout the year, but due to limited space and other circumstances, many of these youths are not enrolled. Good Shepherd Services can use relevant information about referred youth who meet the inclusion criteria but cannot be accepted for comparison. Ideally, this sample would mirror the characteristics of Good Shepherd Services’ youth and serve as a control group of those who do not participate in a program at Good Shepherd Services. This strategy would require much less access to official criminal and youth justice data, as the comparison group would already be similar to Good Shepherd Services’ clients on relevant pretreatment characteristics. However, there are limitations to this strategy because Good Shepherd Services relies on system referrals and do not always have a waitlist for their programs. If they do have waitlists and are not able to accommodate all of the youth on the waitlist, another option would be to randomize which students are selected from the waitlist.

A third strategy is to compare the outcomes of youths enrolled in similar NSD or C2H NSP programs to the outcomes of youth from the GSS program. Several NSD and C2H NSP programs that operate both within and outside of New York could serve as comparison groups. Although it is unlikely that youth at another NSD or C2H NSP program will completely match the youth served at Good Shepherd Services, they could still provide an appropriate comparison group.

A fourth strategy would be to examine pre- and post-tests. Good Shepherd Services uses several standardized assessments in their youth justice programs. They could compare the client intake assessments to client discharge assessments. The purpose of this strategy is to measure change in individuals after they receive services and participate in program activities. This is a strategy that Good Shepherd Services currently uses.

A fifth strategy would be to measure the level of implementation effort. Good Shepherd Services could match youth who receive higher intensity services (e.g. youth who receive several services and participate in many program activities) with those who receive lower intensity services. This strategy compares youth who are receiving different “doses” of specific program components, by using program indicators of participation and involvement.

Finally, Good Shepherd Services could take advantage of the different program activities and populations served at their two LIFE sites. The Bronx LIFE site uses the Sanctuary Model, while the Brooklyn LIFE site uses Solution Based Casework. There will also be inherent differences in the types of youth served at the Bronx LIFE and the youth served at the Brooklyn LIFE. Good Shepherd Services could, therefore, monitor and compare the program activities and outcomes of Bronx LIFE youth and Brooklyn LIFE youth. This matching could allow Good Shepherd Services to determine if one or both programs could
be modified to improve program implementation and effectiveness. This strategy would be more useful in a process evaluation, while the other matching strategies would be useful in an outcome evaluation.

**Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)**

An alternative to a direct evaluation is the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP). The SPEP was designed by Mark Lipsey and colleagues to be used as an evaluation tool by service providers and juvenile justice agencies. The SPEP provides a rating scheme for assessing the effectiveness of youth justice programs in reducing recidivism. The rating scheme assigns points to a program based on how closely program characteristics match best practice guidelines. These guidelines were developed based on the findings from a meta-analysis of 548 independent studies of youth justice interventions. Effective programs are those that adhere to characteristics shown to be effective by the meta-analysis, in a manner that research suggests will lead to positive effects.

To use the SPEP with Good Shepherd Services, the Graduate Research Fellows would examine descriptive information pertaining to the services provided by a program, program implementation, and youth participant characteristics. SPEP ratings are then assigned based on four factors derived from Lipsey’s meta-analysis. These four factors are:

1. Type of Program
2. Amount of Treatment
3. Quality of Treatment
4. Risk Level of Youth

**Follow Up**

To evaluate the success of any program or intervention, it is necessary to follow up with clients after they have completed or left the program. If measured properly, long term client success can be considered a reflection of how successfully the program services target the intended issue. Follow-up can also provide an opportunity for receiving positive or negative feedback on the program from the clients, as well as to determine why clients who failed to complete the program terminated their participation. The information collected in follow-up can then be presented to the program board and potential funding organizations as evidence of the impact that the program has on participants.
Good Shepherd Services developed an extensive follow-up strategy, which can be executed with a relatively low budget. They outlined several methods for following-up with youth after they leave the program, such as letters, phone calls, e-mail, and social networking sites. The Graduate Research Fellows can supplement the procedures developed by Good Shepherd Services with additional strategies that could be useful. Once Good Shepherd Services identifies key goals for each program, they could use these procedures to follow up with youth at regular intervals for a longer period of time (e.g., three years) after youth complete or leave a program. This would provide Good Shepherd Services with more information about the long-term effectiveness of their programs. Alternatively, the agency could follow up with a representative sample of youth after they leave the program. Using a sample would save resources while still gathering information about the effectiveness of programs.

**Preliminary Recommendations**

- **Continue managing data with ETO (or a similar electronic program)**

  Good Shepherd Services should continue to enter all data into Efforts To Outcome (ETO), or a comparable database, including the data from the excel spreadsheets, case files, etc. This information should include demographic information, assessment information, the services received by the youth (e.g., # of sessions attended, # of family and school visits, amount of educational or court advocacy, etc.), and youth progress during and after the program (e.g., family connectedness, educational engagement, criminal involvement, etc.) to enhance program monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

- **Begin developing comparison strategies**

  Good Shepherd Services should carefully consider the matching strategies outlined above. These strategies are useful for assessing both program implementation and program success. Good Shepherd Services already collects much of the data they would need to implement many of these strategies right away.

- **Begin following up with clients who have completed the program**

  Design and implement a follow-up plan, based on the follow-up procedures developed by Good Shepherd Services, as well as any supplemental information provided by the Graduate Research Fellows. Good Shepherd Services should design this follow-up plan to collect information on participants once they leave one of Good Shepherd Services’ programs. This will help to determine the long-term effects that the NSD, C2H NSP, or LIFE programs have on participants.
**GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES GUIDEBOOKS**

The Graduate Research Fellows have prepared two additional supplements to this work plan: an Evaluation Guidebook and a Follow-up Guidebook.

The Evaluation Guidebook expands on selected topics related to the mission and programs of Good Shepherd Services. We discuss background research on topics underlying the models used by Good Shepherd Services. The Evaluation Guidebook also presents expanded versions of the theory of change and logic model prepared for Good Shepherd Services. Next, we discuss additional information on evaluation techniques most appropriate for Good Shepherd Services.

Finally, a separate Follow-up Guidebook offers information and suggestions on how to find and maintain contact with clients after they have completed association with Good Shepherd Services.
References


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