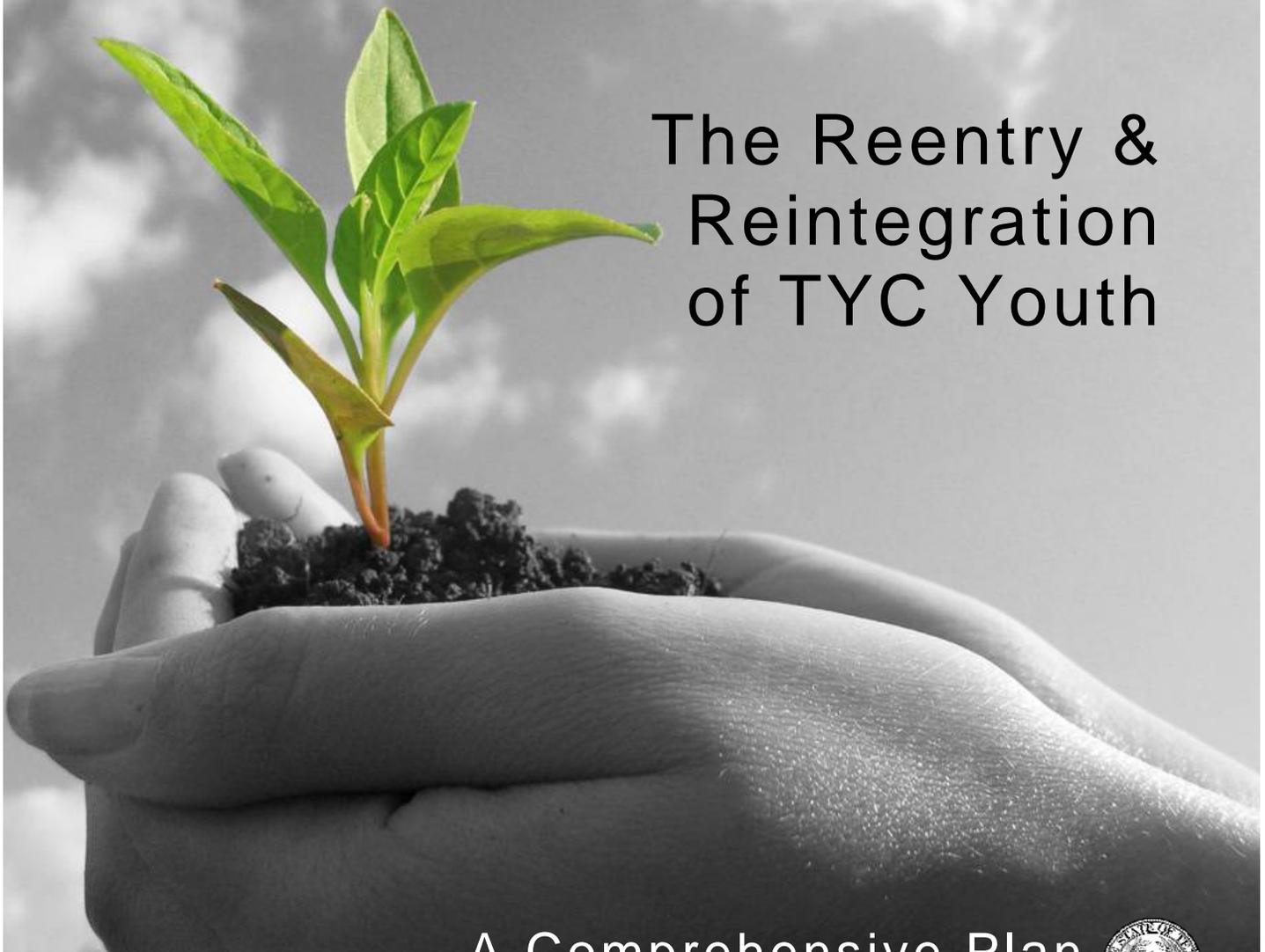


CULTIVATING SUCCESS

The Reentry &
Reintegration
of TYC Youth



A Comprehensive Plan
from the Texas Youth Commission



Cheryl K. Townsend, Executive Director
James D. Smith, Director of Youth Services

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“TYC can be the beginning of something good.
You gotta make up your mind to be positive!”

– Youth D.P. (Crockett State School)

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“TYC is a chance. They are preparing you for the free. Once you get to be 18, there are no more chances, so you better do good here.”

– Youth J.M. (San Antonio Parole)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Texas Youth Commission is to return previously delinquent youth home to their communities with new perspectives, attitudes, and the skills necessary to be productive and successful. The concept of rehabilitation and not imposing the disabilities that result from criminal conviction on young offenders is the reason the juvenile justice system has existed separately from that of the adults in Texas since the mid-1800s. With major reforms, TYC has renewed its focus to emphasize re-entry and reintegration as not just the end of the TYC care continuum, but as its chief focus. The anticipated result of this new approach and investment is a decrease in recidivism and stronger and safer communities.

Youth admitted to TYC are not typical, not even for the vast majority of delinquent youth in the Texas juvenile justice system. Instead, they are the most serious or most chronic, comprising less than 3% of all youth who get in trouble with the law in the state each year. Most have encountered failure in important aspects of their lives, as well as early attempts at intervention. Often, they increasingly display violent behavior, perform at below grade-level achievement, and have significantly increased needs for specialized treatment. TYC is often their last chance at rehabilitation before becoming adults who are likely to engage in continued criminal behavior. The agency accepts the challenge of treating these most troubled youth.

In simple terms, TYC starts by identifying the factors that caused youth to engage in delinquency, and then examines and fosters what they need to successfully transition back to their community. Given that the goal is returning home and that the majority of TYC youth will indeed be released before they turn 19, planning and preparation for re-entry and reintegration is critical.

Before significant reforms in 2007, TYC's re-entry process focused heavily on surveillance, parole requirements, and consequences for violations. Evidence-based research and youth testimony show instead that the most important ingredients in a youth's future success depend on "beginning with the end in mind." So, TYC now begins planning for a youth's release the day he or she arrives at an intake unit. Throughout treatment, there is an emphasis on continual assessment of risk and protective factors, engaging families, enhanced education and workforce development, as well as mobilizing mentors and other community partners. Successful youth consistently express the importance of having genuine connections with mentoring individuals or feeling a part of their communities.

TYC conducts an assessment of each youth to identify his or her unique set of risk and protective factors, by using an evidence-based instrument known as the Positive Achievement Change Tool. The resulting information lays the foundation for the youth's individualized community reentry plan. Some of the youth's risk factors identified are static and therefore will not change. With this in mind, TYC focuses on the dynamic risk and protective factors to improve the youth's skills and coping mechanisms to meet his or her needs in a pro-social and lawful manner.

Each reentry plan focuses on seven specific reentry domains—*self, family, school, peers, leisure, living situation, and work/vocational development*. The domains are mechanisms that allow case plans to be individualized to reduce the risk of failure for youth. By addressing each of the relevant domains, TYC is demonstrating a holistic approach to rehabilitation.

While in TYC's care, youth participate in the CoNEXTions[®] rehabilitation strategy which includes evidence-based programming such as Motivational Interviewing[®], Cognitive Life Skills[®], Aggression Replacement Therapy[®], Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy[®], and Thinking for a Change[®].

Successful completion of CoNEXTions[®] is demonstrated by the youth's movement through an incentive-based stage progression system. At the core of the stage progression system are the five basic rules. Use of these rules proves effective in every day life situations while in TYC's care and upon release from TYC.

In addition to CoNEXTions[®], for youth with more intensive needs, TYC offers specialized treatment such as mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, sexual behavior therapy, and capital and violent offender programming. In response to the increased percentage of youth identified with specialized treatment needs, TYC offers expanded opportunities to obtain these services in both high and medium restriction settings. These youth may also be connected to specialized aftercare treatment providers in the community to allow for continued supports and services.

In addition to the residential rehabilitation programs provided, TYC uses evidence-based approaches to successfully reintegrate youth into their homes as well as their communities while on parole. TYC provides intensive in-home services to families such as Functional Family Therapy[®] in selected areas of the state and will soon introduce Multi-systemic Therapy[®]. This prepares both the youth and family for successful reunification.

TYC also participates in the Performance-based Standards (PbS) system which allows for a comparison of performance on national standards in juvenile corrections between TYC and more than 200 other juvenile facilities across the country.

The key to successful delivery of re-entry and reintegration programming is the consistent communication and collaboration between residential and community care partners. By meeting youth's individual needs and capitalizing on his or her strengths, family support, as well as community assets and resources, TYC has transformed the way it prepares youth to re-enter their communities. This approach paves the path for long-lasting success.

The Five Basic TYC Rules:

1. **Be in the right place at the right time**
2. **Follow directions**
3. **Participate in activities**
4. **Respect others**
5. **Accept Consequences**

INTRODUCTION

As the Texas Youth Commission's populations continue to change, the agency is experiencing a significant increase in the percentage of youth with violent behaviors, specialized treatment needs and below grade level education achievements. These youth arrive having experienced failure in key aspects of their lives. TYC's role is to provide youth with the skills sets necessary to succeed in these areas while in the agency's care and in the future.

TYC has been mindful of the best practices derived from literature reviews and youth testimony in developing its new and current re-entry process. The basic tenants of the re-entry planning process are that it is individualized, youth-centered, family focused, culturally competent and evidence-based. It is assessment driven and provides youth with a comprehensive, collaborative, and continuous approach to reentry planning. TYC's innovative rehabilitative strategy, CoNEXTions[®] focuses on two questions:

1. What causes youth to come into the juvenile justice system? (*risk factors*); and,
2. What keeps youth from returning to the system? (*protective factors*).

It is with this in mind that TYC concentrates on helping each youth to reduce his or her risk factors while increasing his or her protective factors.

MAJOR TYC RE-ENTRY AND REINTEGRATION IMPROVEMENTS

Traditional re-entry practices informed the families rather than involved them, offered youth specialized treatment opportunities based on their minimum length of stay (MLOS), developed transition plans late in the youth's stay which were generally driven by the institutional case manager with little input from the family or parole officer (PO). Once on parole the focus was on reporting, surveillance and parole requirements with consequences for violations. That approach did not achieve acceptable results.

TYC has made significant improvements in the re-entry process. TYC now:

- **Starts re-entry planning at intake**
- **Assesses risk and protective factors upon admission**
- **Continually reviews youth needs at short intervals**
- **Uses evidence-based practices**
- **Affords increased specialized treatment opportunities**
- **Offers expanded education and workforce development opportunities**
- **Enhances family and community involvement**
- **Focuses on the youth's needs and services as well as surveillance and parole conditions**
- **Coordinates and collaborates with partners throughout the treatment continuum**



The goal of TYC's new treatment strategy – CoNEXTions[®] – is to decrease recidivism and crime among youth in the program by providing the youth with skills training and interventions specific to decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors.

An integral part of the CoNEXTions[®] rehabilitation strategy and foundation of the stage progression system is the five basic rules. The simplicity of this approach is that the rules are just as applicable in the community as in TYC facilities. They are guidelines to success. All staff and youth are expected to follow the basic rules which are:

- 1) Be in the right place at the right time;
- 2) Follow directions;
- 3) Participate in activities;
- 4) Respect others; and
- 5) Accept consequences.

Beginning with the end in mind, TYC starts planning for the day a youth will return to his or her community on the very day they first arrive at TYC. The admission and assessment process includes a comprehensive array of tests to determine a youth's needs, with on-going assessments every 90 days. Using Motivational Interviewing[®] techniques, the evidence-based Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) is completed which identifies the risk and protective factors for the youth. Effectively, the PACT is an inventory of all of the things working in favor of a particular youth and all of the areas where he or she needs help or is at risk. This dynamic inventory will change as the youth moves through rehabilitation at TYC. The goal is to reduce the number and intensity of risk factors, while simultaneously increasing the protective factors. All of these tools not only shape the course of a youth's treatment while in residential therapy, they also help create the foundation for the youth's re-entry portfolio of services.

TYC & Me Profile



SHANIQUE 

Professional Educator

Shanique credits God and TYC staff for helping her recognize opportunities. She has earned two college degrees so far – a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's in Special Education. She is currently an Educational Diagnostician. Her dream is to earn a Ph.D. and open a school for at-risk youth.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RISK FACTORS

There are many risk factors that can and do affect youth, particularly when they are at home in their communities and must make daily choices while living within their unique home-life circumstances and environments. Some of these risk factors are static and will not change while others are dynamic. TYC concentrates on impacting the dynamic risk and protective factors for the youth. There are eight significant risk factors referred to as “the Big 8” that are highly correlated to recidivism. These are the chief factors on which TYC rehabilitation and re-entry planning is based. They are:

- Antisocial values: *might makes right, “it’s mine if I can take it”*
- Pro-criminal associates: *family or friends frequently involved in criminal activity*
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs: *involvement in criminal activity to support drug habit*
- Personality factors: *aggression, self involvement, risk taking*
- History of antisocial behavior: *involvement in criminal activities*
- Family functioning: *poor supervision or guidance, criminal drug history*
- Low academic/vocational success: *2-4 grades below reading level, special education, suspension, expulsion*
- Poor use of free time: *not actively involved in pro-social groups or activities*

INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY PLANS

The results of a youth’s PACT drive the development of his or her individualized community re-entry plan. A youth’s community re-entry plan focuses on the seven specific re-entry domains, or core areas of focus in making successful transitions home. They are: *self, family, school, peers, leisure, living situation, and work/vocational development*. All of these domains are different for each youth and depend upon the varying circumstances of the communities to which they will return. When a carefully crafted and coordinated plan exists to address each of the youth’s risk and protective factors in these domains, the youth is better prepared to take on the issues and circumstances associated with returning to their community. Youth, family and community involvement are paramount in the planning and transitioning of the youth to ensure an opportunity for success.

Youth who have been successful graduates of the TYC rehabilitation program, when reflecting upon their own re-entry experiences, cite as positive forces: feeling connected to the community, an individual or individuals who have influenced and guided them, and education and workforce opportunities. The following sections explore in more detail the strategies TYC uses in each of the seven re-entry domains to prepare a youth to return to their communities as productive young members.



SEVEN RE-ENTRY DOMAINS

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: SELF

- Each youth participates in TYC's CoNEXTions[®] rehabilitation program with an incentive-driven stage progression system. In each stage, there are objectives for the youth to complete which will increase his/her understanding of how their personal risk and protective factors relate to success or lack of success in the community including the committing offense and underlying attitudes, values and beliefs.
- Specialized treatment services are provided throughout the state in both high and medium restriction locations. These services include mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, sexual behavior therapy and the capital and violent offender program. To ensure youth have a support system upon release and a continuum of care exists; youth are connected with contract providers in the community to receive specialized aftercare treatment.
- TYC uses evidence-based programming such as Cognitive Life Skills[®], Aggression Replacement Training[®], Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy[®], and Thinking for a Change[®] to develop a youth's skills sets, coping mechanisms and enhance their self-esteem to better equip them to be successful upon return to the community. These approaches are supplemented with gender specific curricula such as Girls Circle and Boys Council. In addition, Learning for Life[®] curriculum is used to assist youth with character development and life skills.
- Current literature and youth testimony reiterate the positive effect mentors have on the successful return of youth to the community. TYC provides mentoring opportunities to youth through local Volunteer Resource Councils as well as through agreements with AMACHI/Big Brothers, Big Sisters of North Texas; Big Brothers, Big Sisters of South Texas and Goodwill Industries of Central and South Texas. These mentors connect with a youth while they are in a facility and provide support and guidance throughout the transition process and once in the community.
- For youth with chronic medical conditions, the Nurse Case Manager in institutions participates in release planning, provides patient education and a medical discharge summary that identifies on-going medical needs and required follow-up. A 30-day supply of medication is also provided for the youth upon release.
- TYC parole officers focus their discussions with the youth during parole meetings on how the youth are coping with their risk factors. Recent research shows that youth recidivate less frequently with this type of interaction rather than interactions in which the parole meeting consisted only of discussions of parole requirements.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: FAMILY

- Because early and continuous family engagement is imperative to a youth's success, families are contacted by the case manager assigned to the youth upon admission to the facility. The case manager discusses with the family the youth's history and other relevant issues related to re-entry in the community and family reunification.
-

TYC & Me Profile



ROGER
Certified Nurse Assistant



Roger was inspired to study nursing at a career fair hosted by his TYC parole office. He passed the state exam and is a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA). Currently, he is studying in a Renal Technology Program and plans to eventually become a Registered Nurse.

- Upon the youth's admission to TYC, the families are provided a copy of *Understanding the Texas Youth Commission & the Parents' Bill of Rights: The TYC Family Handbook* which provides valuable information to assist the family in navigating the correctional system.
- As required by SB 103, TYC staff in partnership with parents, youth and advocates, developed the Parent's Bill of Rights in 2009. The Parent's Bill of Rights explains TYC's agreed upon obligation and commitment to the families of youth in our care. This document empowers the parents to know their rights to be involved and to actively participate in their child's rehabilitation. An involved and informed parent provides a support system for their child and improves the youth's success at re-entry.
- Through a prioritized placement process that evaluates the youth's needs in conjunction with their home location, each youth is assigned to a rehabilitation program. The placement will meet the youth's treatment needs while making every effort to place the youth regionally and close to home to enhance their ability to remain connected to their family and community support system.
- Because we know the important role a family plays in a youth's re-entry success, the Family Liaisons at each facility conduct monthly orientation sessions, family visitation events and educational seminars. In some cases, the Family Liaison provides information to the family regarding free resources in their local communities. The goal is for case managers and family liaison's to inform families of the resources available and to ensure the youth remains connected to their family.
- During a youth's out-of-home placement, family dynamics often change. To assist families and youth in coping with the changes and reintegration of the youth into the new family dynamic, TYC is using evidence-based approaches to actively engage the family and youth in an intense home-based treatment process. Currently Functional Family Therapy[®] (FFT) is in place in selected urban areas for FY 2010 and Multi-systemic Therapy[®] (MST) is planned for FY 2011. While these approaches are



traditionally used in diversionary programs, they have proven effective with the successful community re-entry and placement of youth with substance abuse needs and youth with mental health needs.

- TYC is finalizing a process which will provide youth an opportunity to make day and overnight home visits with specific objectives outlined. This furlough opportunity will allow the youth to reintegrate with their family, begin the enrollment process in school, submit applications for employment, and connect with local resources all while utilizing available supervision strategies to ensure the youth abides by the plan.
- In an effort to allow more families to participate in parole meetings, the parole offices offer extended office hours in the evening and on Saturdays. In addition, TYC has established alternate reporting sites in many large cities which may be closer to the home or work location of the families requiring less travel time.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: SCHOOL

- TYC began standardizing its educational curriculum in all TYC facilities during Fall 2009. The agency aligned its curriculum with what is being used in Texas public school systems to allow for a seamless transfer of coursework within TYC schools and into communities. TYC has implemented a comprehensive reading skills program that will result in a projected first-year outcome of a two-to-three grade level increase in reading comprehension.
- In partnership with the Texas Virtual School Network and colleges and universities, there are increased opportunities for educational coursework for all youth. This will allow 20 percent of youth to receive advanced diplomas and enter college programs.
- TYC has expanded and continues to expand the vocational programming offered at facilities and dual college credit courses available in 2009 which will allow 30 percent of the youth to complete vocational certification programs.
- Working with public school and workforce representatives, implementation of an accredited curriculum scope and sequence facilitates student's rapid reintegration into public schools. TYC is placing video conferencing equipment in all halfway houses and parole offices, allowing youth to finish coursework started at TYC upon release. This will also assist TYC education counselors in maintaining contact with youth to better provide guidance for re-entry into school and workforce.
- Portable portfolios (copies of birth certificates, important tests results, industry certifications, important identification materials) travel with the students while at TYC and upon release. These documents are invaluable to successfully reenter school, enter the workforce with higher paying jobs, or continue on to college.
- Education liaisons work with TYC students at halfway houses or on parole to help reintegrate them into the community. Liaisons work with local schools and industries to ensure education and/or employment opportunities. TYC's goal is for 50 percent of the youth returning to the community to be enrolled in local schools, industry programs or college. The remaining youth should be employed after 30-60 days.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: PEERS

- The youth's peer group is generally from their neighborhood and the youth's activities are tied to the peer group. When the youth returns home, he/she will experience the same temptations to return to the peer group and antisocial activities they engaged in prior to commitment to TYC. TYC's goal is to establish avenues for youth to experience positive peer groups and social engagements.
- Faith based volunteers provide opportunities for youth to explore their faith and strengthen their values and beliefs both in the facilities and the community.
- In FY 2010, TYC developed a gang intervention curriculum as required by HB 2086. This curriculum allows youth to explore the risk and protective factors related to the gang membership. Through the use of Cognitive Life Skills[®] groups youth explore ways to handle situations differently, see the risks associated with the chosen peer group and make decisions to seek out alternate pro-social peer groups.
- Re-entry Teams in the parole offices connect with the youth while they are in a facility. The Re-entry Team to include the family and other relevant community partners provide connections with community resources such as Boys and Girls Clubs, religious organizations, and mentors.
- Upon release, the youth's parole officer provides community service opportunities. Participation in completing community service hours connects the youth with local volunteer organizations allowing the youth to engage in pro-social relationships.
- A positive influential person in their life makes a significant impact on their ability to succeed. With that in mind, TYC takes full advantage of assigning mentors to youth who will hopefully follow them from the facility to their home placement.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: LEISURE

- Ineffective use of leisure time is one of the most important risk factors for a youth. To decrease the likelihood of recidivism, TYC provides youth with an opportunity to experience a variety of social skill building events.
- Youth may participate in intramural and high school sporting events. These opportunities develop teamwork skills, coping mechanisms, and conflict resolution skills which translate into every day life situations in the community.
- Volunteers provide services to youth such as guitar lessons, cooking classes, yoga classes, Boy and Girl Scouts, and many others to provide a chance to expand the youth's awareness of pro-social community activities. Making youth aware of other choices available in the community will encourage them to participate in these activities upon release.
- Prior to transition, the parole officer and case manager identify resources in the youth's community that encourage participation in pro-social environments such as Boys and Girls clubs.
- Once in the community, mentors and volunteers provide youth with an opportunity to engage in positive leisure activities such as attending movies, cultural events, sporting events, and voluntary religious services.



- The youth is primarily responsible for increasing his or her protective factors. The youth's *Making it Happen Plan* is developed in partnership with the family and relevant community organizations, to ensure the youth has a plan of how to utilize their leisure time effectively and not return to anti-social activities.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: LIVING SITUATION

- Through discussions between the case manager, family, youth and parole officer the community location which best meets the youth's needs is determined.
- Once the most appropriate release location is determined, the family liaison, case manager, parole officer, education liaison and workforce development specialist coordinate a smooth transition with supports in place.
- Use of transition placements, such as halfway houses, occurs to ensure the youth are successful in the community even if home is the ultimate placement. The transition placement affords the youth an opportunity to field test the skills they have learned with added supervision prior to returning to their home environment.
- Youth with an unapproved home or lacking a family support system receive independent living preparation. Youth learn basic skills needed to live independently such as budgeting, money management, food preparation, cleaning skills, navigating the public transit system and gaining employment. Once a youth has a plan of action in place for meeting their most basic survival needs, they can move forward regarding self-improvement objectives.
- TYC has partnered with DFPS to coordinate the delivery of Preparation for Adult Living curriculum while in the facilities. Additionally, this partnership allows the youth to receive subsidies when they are transitioning out of the foster care system.
- To reduce recidivism and protect potential victims in the home, prior to a documented sex offender returning home, the parole officer visits the family to complete a home evaluation and a checklist of risk factors associated with sexual re-offending. The parole officer and family develop a safety plan to address the risk factors in the home.

RE-ENTRY DOMAIN: WORK/VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Youth may participate in vocational and workforce development programs throughout the state. These programs, such as building trades, auto repair, mill and cabinetry, horticulture, food management, OSHA, desktop publishing, computer maintenance, *Microsoft A+* certification, customer service specialist and ServSafe training provide an opportunity to increase a youth's marketable skills and success upon release to the community.
- TYC employs Workforce Development Re-entry Specialists in the district offices. These re-entry specialists work with the youth and the family to prepare the youth to enter the workforce and assist them in accessing local workforce and training resources. Having a legitimate means of financial support decreases a youth chances of recidivism.
-

TYC & Me Profile



STEPHEN
Microsoft Master Certified



TYC convinced Stephen to set his sights on education. He earned all six of the Microsoft Office certifications, making him master certified – something that’s difficult for many professionals. He also earned his diploma, college credits, and two other trade certifications in TYC.

- The Workforce Development Re-entry Specialists also promote the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Fidelity Bonding programs available to qualified employers. These programs offer incentives to employers when they hire TYC youth. This allows the youth an opportunity to experience employment in a supportive environment.
- Youth return to the community with a portfolio containing documents that prove invaluable to successful school enrollment, entering the workforce with higher paying jobs, or continuing on to college. The portfolio contains a copy of the birth certificate, social security card, student identification card, important educational test results and industry certifications.

GRADUATED RESPONSES

The agency’s goal is for all youth to successfully reenter their community and become functioning members of their family and society. However, not all youth handle the increased freedom with equal responsibility. In these instances, TYC has graduated responses to assist the youth in accomplishing his or her rehabilitative objectives. The Re-entry Team, youth, parole officer, family, education liaison and workforce development specialist meet to discuss the reasons for the youth’s lack of progress.

In some cases, minor adjustments may result in the youth getting back on track. The youth and family may require additional services or contacts in the community. A youth may be transferred to a specialized case load or their supervision level may be increased. As the need for intervention increases, a combination of supervision strategies to include electronic monitoring and increased contacts may assist the youth in being successful.



Youth who experience continued difficulty adjusting in the community and have their parole revoked as a result of technical or misdemeanor violations are afforded an opportunity to participate in the Accelerated Re-entry Program (ARP). The ARP created in February 2009 is a 60-90 day targeted residential intervention to address the undesirable behavior of youth on parole. Youth are assessed by the parole officer, family, case manager, education liaison and other involved participants to identify one or more risk factors which negatively impacted the youth's ability to be successful in the community. Youth are returned to parole status in the community as soon as they make satisfactory progress in the identified risk areas.

Youth who demonstrate an increased risk to public safety, having been arrested and/or charged with law violations, may also have their parole status revoked. These youth are returned to a high restriction facility and assigned a minimum length of stay determined by the severity of the criminal behavior. During this time, the youth and his/her case manager will revise the community re-entry plan to identify and address the risk factors associated with the revocation. Youth are returned to parole status in the community as soon as they make satisfactory progress in the identified risk areas.

TYC focuses its efforts on reducing a youth's risk to re-offend and increasing the youth's protective factors, all of which best serve public safety interests. TYC's graduated responses have built-in accountability systems, while providing treatment and supervision to produce increasingly positive results.

CONCLUSION

TYC youth receive a seamless continuum of services as they progress from their first day at TYC through parole and the transition to independence within their community. The service continuum includes assessments, skills development rehabilitation, and re-entry supports and services, all specially designed to identify and reduce a youth's individual risk factors and to increase his or her protective factors. For some youth this is a long journey and for others with family support systems in place it may be shorter. This comprehensive holistic approach to re-entry planning throughout a youth's placement offers the opportunity to reduce the risk of harm to others, repair the harm the youth have caused, and build on the strengths of the youth, the family, and the community.

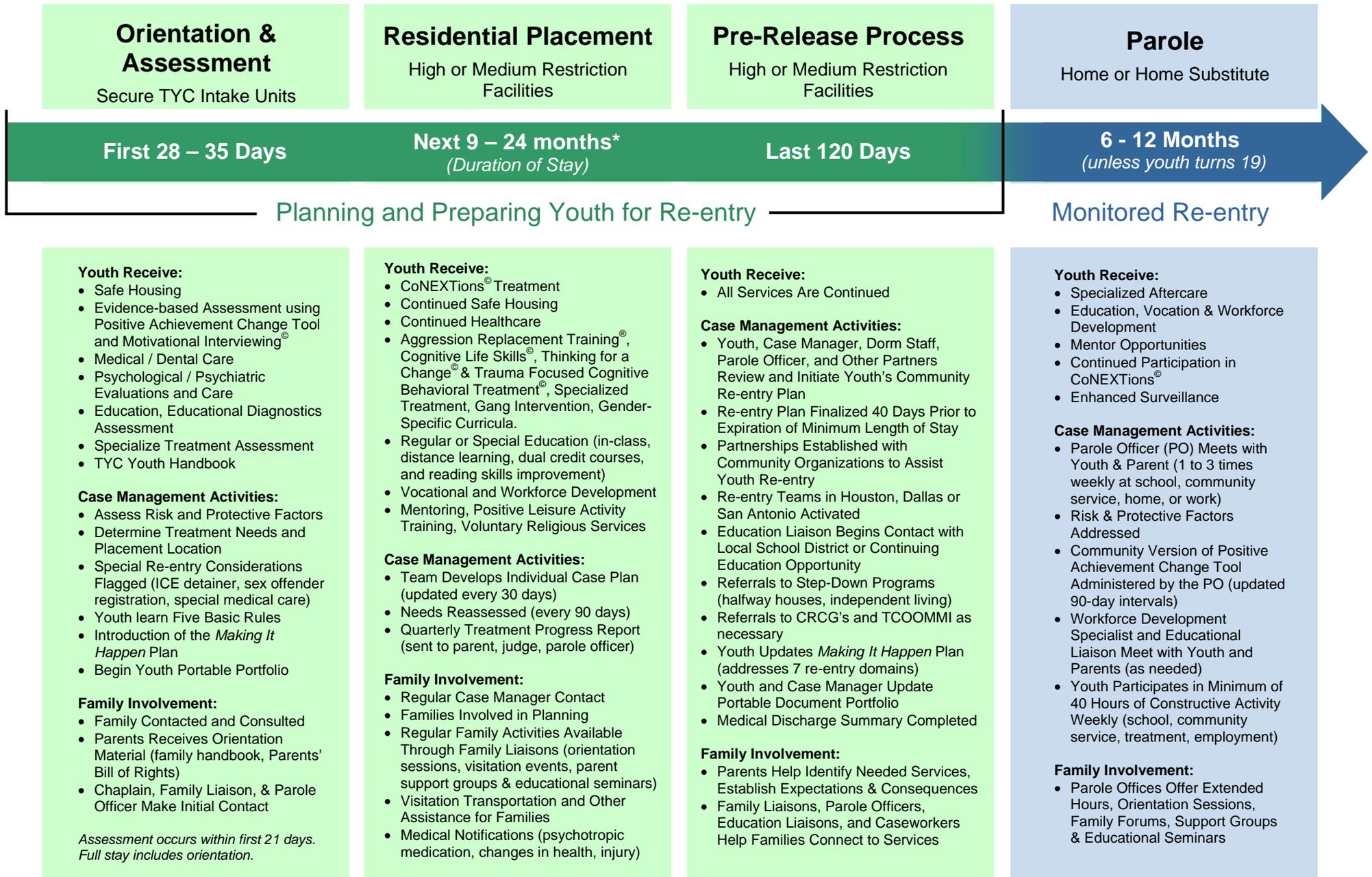
APPENDICES



“Try to stick with the positive peers and they’ll help you stay out of trouble.”

– Youth A.G. (Dallas Parole)

THE RE-ENTRY & REINTEGRATION OF TYC YOUTH



*Typical Minimum Length of Stay (MLOS) based on calculations for indeterminate sentenced youth. Some sentenced offenders may be required to serve a longer Minimum Period of Confinement (MPC).

IMPROVED RE-ENTRY & REINTEGRATION: THEN & NOW

Orientation & Assessment

NOW

- Faster Assessment (within 21 days)
- Safe Housing Protocol
- Motivational Interviewing® Used in Assessments
- Evidence-Based Assessment & Case Management Tool Identifies Risk and Protective Factors
- Specialized Treatment Priority Status Expanded
- Youth Placement Plan Developed
- Re-Entry Planning Begins at Intake
- Introduction to New CoNEXTions® Rehabilitation Program, the Five Basic Rules, and the *Making It Happen Plan*.
- Family Involvement Sought
- Family Handbook & Parents' Bill of Rights Delivered
- Youth Portfolio Established
- Medical Notifications to Parents Strengthened

THEN

- Assessment Took 45-60 days
- Initial Assessments Not Routinely Re-evaluated Throughout Treatment
- Minimal Contact with Family
- Separate Case Managers for Assessment and Case Planning
- Case Plan Review Schedule Based on Youth Classification, Not Uniform Time Frames
- Specialized Treatment Priority Based on Minimum Length of Stay
- General Consent Form Sent to Parents for Medical Services

Residential Placement

NOW

- Regular Reassessments of Youth for Treatment Needs, Progress, Safe Housing, Case Plans
- Evidence-Based Approaches: Aggression Replacement Training®, Cognitive Life Skills®, Thinking for a Change® & Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Treatment®, Specialized Treatment, Gang Intervention, Gender-Specific Curricula
- Expanded Specialized Treatment
- Better Parental Medical Notifications
- Increased Educational Opportunities: Distance Learning, Dual Credit Classes, Reading Skills
- Increased Vocational and Workforce Development Opportunities
- Skill Groups, Activities, Incentives
- Families Involved in Rehabilitation, Connected to Youth/ Liaisons Host: Orientation, Visitation Events, Family Forums, and Education Seminars
- Parole Officers & Community Partners Active in Treatment
- Updates and Progress Reports to Parents, Parole Officers, Judge

THEN

- No Systematic Youth Needs Reassessment
- Case Plans Not Based on Risk and Protective Factors
- Limited Communication Between Institutions and Reentry Staff
- Minimal Family Participation In Case Planning
- Families Were "Informed" Rather Than Involved
- Treatment Program Not Evidence-Based

Pre-Release Process

NOW

- Clear Program Completion Criteria
- Release Review Panel Addresses Youth Past Minimum Length of Stay
- Executive Management Reviews Youth With Multiple Stay Extensions
- Community Re-entry Plan Initiated 120 Days Prior to Release/Finalized 40 Days Before Release
- Multiple Staff, Youth, Parole Officer, Community Partners Make Re-entry Plan
- Partnerships Established With Community Organizations, Volunteers/Mentors, Faith-Based Groups to Assist in Re-entry
- Re-entry Teams Established in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio to Help Transitions
- Education Liaison Contacts Local School District About Pending Release
- Referrals Made to Step-Down Programs (halfway houses, independent living)
- Necessary Referrals Made to CRCG's and TCOOMMI
- Youth Updates *Making It Happen Plan*/ Addressed Seven Re-entry Domains
- Youth Portable Document Portfolio Updated
- Medicaid-Eligible Youth/Families Can Apply for Benefits Prior to Release

THEN

- Limited Central Oversight of Release Process/Local Decisions Not Uniform
- Transition Plans Developed Late and With Limited Youth, Family, Parole Officer Input
- Referrals to Community Providers Consisted of Only Providing Youth Contact Information
- Parents Informed, Not Involved in Release Planning

Parole

NOW

- Parole Officer (PO) Schedules Meeting with Youth and Parent for Day of Release
- PO Focuses on Risk/ Protective Factors
- PO Meets More Frequently with Youth and Family (at various locations), Parent Support Groups/Programs Available
- Community Positive Achievement Change Tool Administered/ Regularly Evaluated
- Specialized Case Loads Expanded (includes youth with mental health issues)
- Workforce Development Specialists and Educational Liaisons Active in Re-entry
- Increased Supervision/Surveillance Available (electronic monitoring, GPS)
- Functional Family Therapy® Established in Tarrant and Harris, Children's Aftercare Re-entry Experience in Bexar County
- Multi-Systemic Therapy® planned for 2011
- Independent Living Enhanced/ Collaboration with HHSC
- Eligible Youth Receive Medicaid Benefits Upon Release/No Delay
- Court Notified of Youth Progress 30 Days Prior Expiration of Youth Minimum Stay
- Extended Hours at Parole Offices/More Alternative Reporting Sites

THEN

- One-Size-Fits-All Surveillance Formula
- Discussions Limited to Parole Conditions and Aftercare Participation
- Family Involvement Not Typical
- Specialized Case Loads for Sex Offenders and Females Only
- Medicaid-Eligible Youth Typically Waited 90-120 Days for Benefits
- Release Notifications to Courts 10 Days Prior to Release