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MINNESOTA AFTERCARE RESOURCE GUIDE

JUVENILE
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COALITION OF MINNESOTA

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Overview

The Juvenile Justice Coalition of Minnesota (JJC) is a systems change and advocacy-based organization that promotes state-level juvenile justice reform throughout Minnesota.

Aftercare Work Group

The JJC would like to recognize and thank the following current and past committee members of the Aftercare Work Group for their help in creating this resource guide. The JJC Aftercare Work Group of community experts, providers, corrections workers and researchers focuses on improving aftercare for youth exiting correctional out-of-home placement facilities.

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ABOUT AFTERCARE

Definition of Aftercare in Minnesota

To promote consistency and shared understanding, we define *aftercare* throughout this manual for the time when a youth leaves a correctional facility and returns to the community.

Aftercare for youth involved in Minnesota's juvenile justice system begins at disposition and is an outcome-oriented process that:

- Prepares youth placed out-of-home to lead a crime-free life after their release by coordinating family and community supports and public and private services in youth's place of residency and community.
- Provides individualized, cultural and gender-responsive services.
- Ensures delivery of planned services and supervision through shared responsibility and accountability of youth, parents/guardians, and public and private agencies.

Purpose of Manual

This manual guides the creation, implementation and assessment of aftercare in Minnesota. It reflects juvenile justice and aftercare-specific guiding principles developed by the JJC using research on best practices.

Guiding Principles for Minnesota's Aftercare System

- 1. Continuity:** Aftercare planning should be included throughout the continuum of service for every youth, beginning prior to placement. It must be included at pre-placement screening, provided during placement and continued after release.
- 2. Community:** Aftercare recognizes and supports youths' connections with their families (or surrogates) and communities during and after placement.
- 3. Communication:** Family, public and private agencies and community stakeholders share relevant information with each other in a timely, efficient and respectful manner when planning and implementing youth aftercare.
- 4. Individuality:** Aftercare services are tailored to youth's family and community connections, strengths, needs, risk to re-offend, race, culture, psychological development, age and gender.
- 5. Sensibility:** Aftercare planning should be realistic, adaptable and reflective of available community resources.
- 6. Obligation:** Aftercare embraces youth's accountability to the victim and community through restorative justice and/or community-oriented practices.
- 7. Measurability:** Aftercare plans include specific, measureable outcomes for youth in the areas of independent life skills, academic achievement, and work skills development.
- 8. Universality:** An exit plan should be in place when youth leave a placement facility, regardless of the reasons for their release.

ABOUT AFTERCARE

9. Proportionality: Intensity of supervision and response to violations of post-release and court conditions are proportional to the risks and needs of youth, families and communities.

10. Coordination: Public and private agencies coordinate youth transitions to the appropriate educational settings and services upon release from placement.

11. Accountability: Public and private agencies, family, youth and community stakeholders hold each other accountable for all aspects of youth's aftercare.

Outcomes

To guarantee aftercare delivery is effective and holds stakeholders accountable, the following outcomes are recommended. Common outcomes measured and shared by Minnesota's aftercare systems would provide valuable information and data to assist with funding decisions and policy development.

Program Completion: Youth successfully meet the individualized goals of established aftercare plans.

Coordination: Youth, families, corrections staff, facilities staff and community-based providers are satisfied with the level of cooperation and communication, and all key individuals are actively involved in the successful implementation and completion of a youth's aftercare plan.

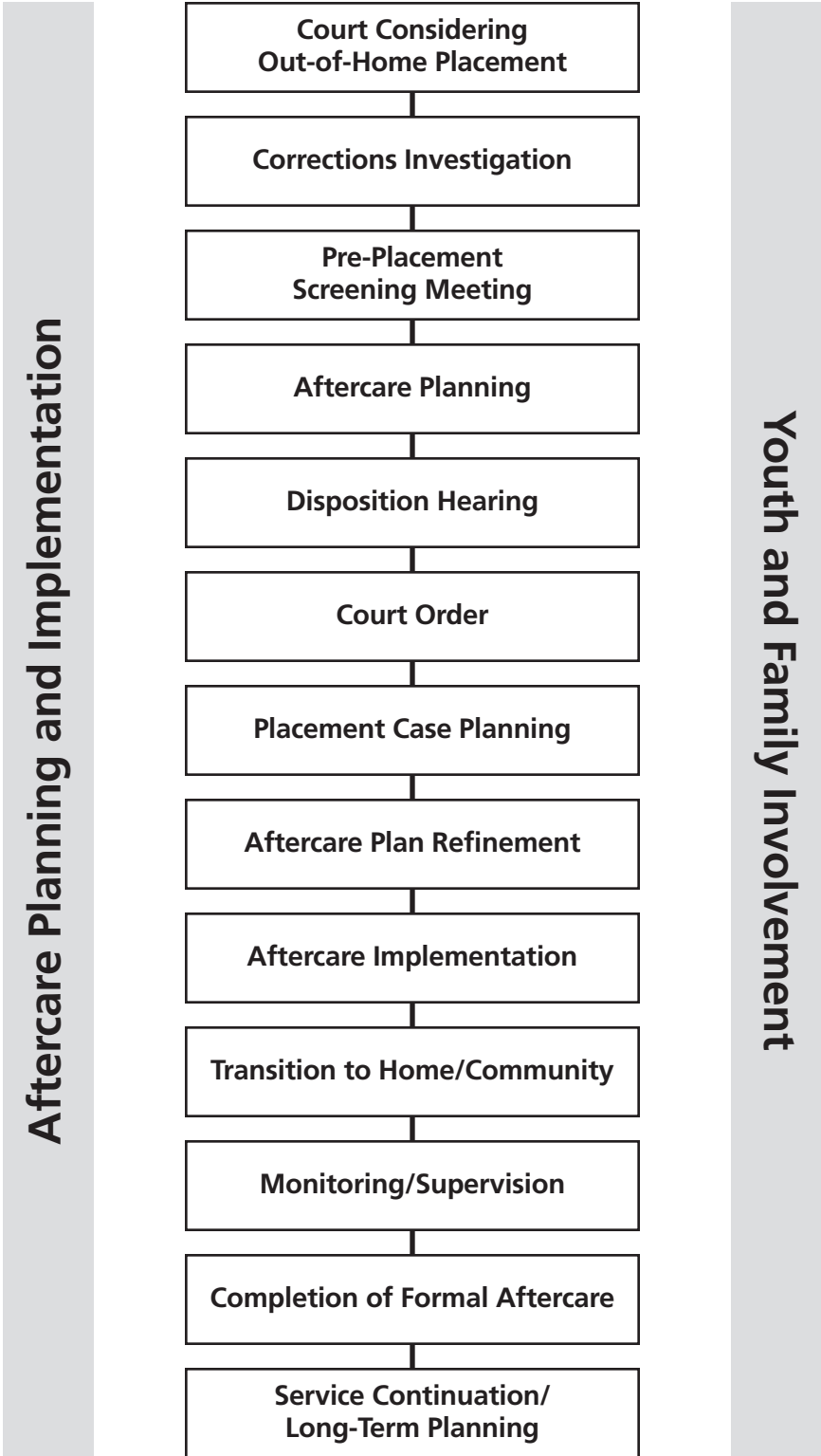
Education: Regular attendance in an educational program will help youth complete their primary education.

Living Arrangements: A youth lives in a safe living arrangement (the place the youth calls home).

Vocation: Youth are employed, enrolled in an employment/vocational training program or volunteering in the community.

Recidivism: A youth receives no adult convictions or new juvenile adjudications.

FLOW CHART



Family Involvement

Family is defined as who the youth identifies as family, even if the legal designation is different. Many families view interactions with the “system” as threatening, unresponsive and confusing. Families feel a loss of control over what is happening to their child. Yet, a youth’s success hinges on family involvement and a supportive home environment. Like the youth, families need support and assistance. Families need to be viewed as experts and equal partners in the entire process.

Family Interaction

Responsible Party: *All Parties*

Challenges

- Preconceived notions of professionals when working with families
- Challenging family dynamics and histories
- Past involvement with juvenile justice, child welfare and human services systems
- Scheduling of hearings, visitations, meetings, etc. reflect work day of professionals, not necessarily availability of all family types
- Family member’s own struggles with mental illness, chemical use and involvement in criminal justice system or incarceration

Recommendations

- View families as experts and equal partners in the process
- Involve families early in the process, during placement screening and disposition discussions and decision making
- Document family’s prior history and satisfaction with system(s) to better understand their perspective
- Understand the cultural and ethnic background of family
- Utilize an interpreter as necessary in conversations and discussions to support family understanding and involvement
- Explain the court process and decisions to families and allow them and the youth the opportunity to respond and ask questions

Questions to Consider

1. Has the family had previous involvement with the juvenile justice, criminal justice or child welfare or human services systems? Were those experiences positive or negative?
2. Have any assumptions been made about the cultural identity, genders or background of the youth’s family that may impact court decisions?
3. What are the family’s unique culture and circumstances?
4. Are the decisions being made for the youth specific to that particular youth and family?
5. Are the family’s behavior or level of cooperation rationally related to the involvement of the court in their child’s life?
6. Has the youth’s family been empowered and allowed to advocate for the youth during the court process?
7. What are the family’s barriers to involvement?

PRE-PLACEMENT AND PLACEMENT

Pre-Placement and Placement

Removing a youth from a home can be stressful and disruptive for all parties involved, even if necessary for public safety and to access services. Careful consideration should be taken when determining the appropriateness of placement and type of residential facility. While often the placement choice is dictated by availability of beds or funding considerations, placement decisions should be individual to promote successful youth development and reentry back to the community.

Aftercare begins at disposition and follows a youth through the out-of-home placement process and transition back to a youth's community. According to Minnesota Statute 260B.157, if the court is considering sending a youth to out-of-home placement, a juvenile treatment screening team must meet to assess the youth's needs and develop recommendations. The treatment screening team includes:

- Social workers
- Juvenile justice professionals
- Persons with expertise in the treatment of juveniles who are emotionally disabled, chemically dependent or have a developmental disability
- Parents or guardians as appropriate

Optional Members

- Educational representatives
- Law enforcement
- Tribal representatives

Questions for the Screening Team to Consider

1. What are the goals of placement?
2. Can those goals be met in a youth's community?
3. How will the placement choice impact the youth's return to the community?
4. What treatment or intervention strategies are used by the placement choice?
5. Will the placement choice continue treatment or interventions begun prior to placement?
6. What resources are available in a youth's community to continue treatment or intervention strategies during aftercare?
7. Were the youth and their family consulted when making the placement decision?
8. What are the goals for a youth's aftercare?
9. How will the youth's family maintain connection and involvement in the youth's life while in placement? Will the family receive assistance in learning how to understand the youth's behavior needs, advocate for the youth while in placement and manage their behaviors when the youth returns home?

PRE-PLACEMENT AND PLACEMENT

10. Is the youth involved in child protection?
11. Will the youth age out of placement?
12. Was the appropriateness of the educational setting taken into account when determining the placement choice?
13. Does the youth receive special education services or have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? Can comparable services be provided in the placement setting?
14. Does the youth have any disabilities that cannot be adequately addressed or accommodated in placement?
15. Does the youth's disability require a certain type of placement setting for success?
16. Will placing a youth out of the home increase the chances the youth will fail when they return?
17. Are there issues in the youth's home or school life that needs attention to ensure success?
18. Does the youth have gang affiliations that may impact the youth's placement choice?
19. Has the youth been in placement before?
20. If the youth has been in placement before, did the youth receive sufficient aftercare services and support upon reentry?
21. Does the youth need gender or culturally-specific interventions and services?
22. Has anyone communicated with the youth and their family about the possibility of out-of-home placement and answered all of their questions?
23. Have public safety concerns related to the community and the victim been addressed by the placement decision?

DISPOSITION ORDER

Disposition Order

Disposition orders reflect, in writing, the court's response to a youth's behavior and identification of what is "deemed necessary to the rehabilitation of the child" (MN Statute 260B.198). For a youth to be sent to out-of-home placement, the court must determine whether the youth:

- is a danger to self or others,
- is in need of special treatment or care for mental health or physical health concerns,
- is in need of sex offender treatment, or
- in the case of an offense that would be an adult felony, is in need of mental health or chemical health treatment (MN Statute 260B.198).

Additional guidelines govern youth placed in secure facilities.

The courts may consider whether:

- a felony offense has been committed against a person,
- the youth has previously failed to appear in court,
- an assessment has determined the youth is a danger to self or others and would try to escape a non-secure facility,
- the youth's health or welfare necessitates a secure placement,
- the public needs to be protected,
- program staff and residents need to be protected, or
- the youth has a history of escaping from treatment program (MN Statute 260B.198).

Disposition orders need to include:

1. Why the best interests of the child are served by the disposition ordered, and
2. What alternative dispositions were considered by the court and why such dispositions were not appropriate in the instant case (MN Statute 260B. 198).

According to MN Statute 260B.198 subdivision 4, "When the court orders an out-of-home placement disposition for a child, the court shall state in its disposition order the intended outcome of the placement."

These provisions provide an opportunity for the courts to not only incorporate goals for placement, but add the desired results for aftercare in the disposition order. Including after-care goals in the court order acknowledges the youth's eventual return home to the community and recognizes placement is part of the continuum of services.

Recommendations

- Develop a continuum of care for justice involved youth connecting early intervention, placement and aftercare treatments together.
- Focus continuum of care on continuity of control, range of services, program and service content, social environment and attachment.

Questions for the Court to Consider

1. How does sending the youth to placement ensure public safety when the youth returns home?
2. How does sending the youth to the recommended placement ensure the youth gets needed treatment?

DISPOSITION ORDER

3. Will the youth need to continue treatment after placement and, if so, how?
4. How will the recommended placement ensure the youth will be rehabilitated when the youth returns home?
5. Does the court order include any recommendations for the youths' return home from placement?
6. Does the youth have any disabilities?
7. Does the youth qualify for special education services and will the youth receive comparable and appropriate services in placement?
8. Is the youth involved in child welfare?
9. Has the youth experienced any early childhood or recent trauma or been a witness to violence that may impact the youth's success or failure in placement?
10. Are the policies and practices in the recommended placement trauma-informed?
11. Is there a chance the youth will age out of placement, be homeless or become involved in child welfare as a result of being sent to placement?
12. Does the youth have any diagnosed mental health concerns that need to be addressed in placement?
13. Does the youth have any chemical health concerns that need to be addressed in placement?
14. Is the youth a parent or expecting?
15. Does the recommended placement meet the individual youth's needs or is the recommendation based on availability?
16. How will the youth and the youth's family be prepared for the youth being sent to placement?
17. How will the youth's family be supported during the youth's placement?
Will they have an opportunity to learn how to manage their child's behavior?
18. Have the youth and family's questions been answered and the reasons for the youth's placement explained in a manner understood by all? Are there language or cultural considerations that need to be addressed during the disposition hearing?
19. How will sending the youth to placement support, not undermine, parental authority?
20. Does the youth need cultural or gender-specific services?

PLACEMENT CASE PLANNING

Placement Case Planning

Planning for a youth's return to the community begins with the development of the youth's case plan in out-of-home placement. The placement case plan needs to reflect the end goal in the programming, behavior management, environment and staff interactions within the placement facility.

While all youth need a case plan for placement, regardless of the length of time a youth is committed, statute specifically states youth sent to out-of-home placement for potentially longer than 30 days are required to have a case plan developed by the appropriate agency, the youth's parent or guardians and others identified as appropriate. It must include:

1. The actions to be taken by the child and, if appropriate, the child's parent, guardian or custodian to assure the child's safety, future lawful conduct and compliance with the court's disposition order.
2. The services to be offered and provided by the agency to the child and, if appropriate, the child's parent, guardian or custodian.

The court shall review the case plan and, upon approving it, incorporate it into its disposition order. (MN Statute 260B.198 subdivision 5)

Questions to Consider in Case Plan Development

1. Are the youth and the youth's parents or guardians involved in the placement case plan development?
2. How will the placement case plan build on and continue programming, treatment or interventions the youth participated in prior to placement?
3. What are the goals for the youth's aftercare?
4. How will the placement case plan reflect and work toward the aftercare goals?
5. How does the placement case plan continue during aftercare?
6. Does the case plan/placement facility behavior management program work only within the placement setting?
7. How does placement teach a youth new behaviors that can continue after placement?
8. How does the placement teach youth to make different choices outside of the placement setting?
9. Does the youth have opportunities in placement to learn and practice new decision-making skills?
10. Does the youth have opportunities to contribute to problem-solving within the placement facility?

PLACEMENT CASE PLANNING

11. Does the placement case plan reflect disciplinary policies using a positive youth development model and not strictly a punishment model?
12. Does the placement case plan reflect the educational needs of the individual youth or the programming available in placement?
13. Does the placement case plan reflect programming consistent with what the youth received prior to placement and what the youth will receive during aftercare?
14. Does the placement case plan reflect all recent assessments, screening results and the youth's history, strengths and any prior or current involvement in child welfare, mental health, chemical health or special education?
15. Does the placement case plan include how the youth's family will maintain contact and support with the youth while in placement?
16. Does the placement case plan reflect any gender or culturally-specific needs of the youth?
17. Does the placement case plan support building the youth's competency and skills needed to be successful during aftercare and as an adult?
18. Does the case plan include vocational or employment training transferrable into the work force?
19. Does the placement case plan include community-based programming and partners who will work with the youth during aftercare?
20. Does the placement case plan include measureable, observable and individualized goals for the youth? Do these build on the youth's strengths and correspond with skills and behavior the youth needs to be successful in the community?
21. Does the placement case plan include plans for placement completion regarding the youth's living arrangements, education, vocation, community involvement and health care needs?
22. Does the placement case plan include strategies for improving the environment where the youth lives and is expected to return if that environment contributed to the youth's reasons for going to placement?
23. Does the placement case plan include formal written agreements with assigned roles and responsibilities tailored to the youth's needs?
24. Does the placement case plan include clear direction on collecting, transferring and incorporating the youth's education records, assessments and screening results with the out-of-home placement staff?

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT/PLACEMENT

Family Involvement during Placement

Involvement of family during a youth's placement is crucial for a youth to be successful. Yet involving the family can be difficult due to distances, cultural differences, communication barriers and reluctance or refusal to be involved. Families often do not know how to advocate for their child, fearing retaliation toward their child if they communicate concerns about the child's treatment by other youth or staff or question the placement choice. In addition, system staff may view families as a main contributor to a youth's behaviors and need for placement.

Responsibly Party: *Facility staff, probation staff, family*

Challenges

- Family does not know who to contact about needs of youth in placement
- Family does not feel they have authority to address concerns about placement and what may happen to their child while in placement
- Facility is located far away from family
- Family is concerned youth will be retaliated against if family brings up concerns about conditions or placement

Recommendations

- Recognize cultural and ethnic differences of families and try to accommodate within facility visitation, communication and planning policies and processes
- Provide families a means and an individual within the facility to contact to bring up concerns in a non-threatening manner
- Ensure placement facility has a policy to not retaliate against a youth if family brings up concerns
- Ensure facility provides family clear instructions and explanations of visitation and contact policies
- Ensure family is allowed to visit youth as often as possible in placement to maintain contact and support with their child

Questions to Consider

1. Has the youth's "family" been identified according to the youth's definition?
2. Can the family visit the youth?
3. Is transportation provided?
4. Can the family communicate with the youth on a regular basis?
5. What are the procedures if the family believes the youth is having difficulty at the placement facility? Are those procedures communicated to the family and youth?
6. What language is the family comfortable speaking and reading?
7. Can communication concerns be addressed?
8. Have accommodations been made for cultural or ethnic differences?
9. Does the youth's family receive regular communication and updates from the placement facility about the youth's progress?

FAMILY SERVICE / PLACEMENT

Family Service Needs during Placement

Responsible Party: *Probation staff, facility staff, Human Services*

Challenges

- Uncertainty over who is responsible for connecting a family to needed services and paying for those services
- Lack of available resources to help families build on their strengths, learn parenting skills or address issues contributing to the youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Lack of financial resources to pay for needed family services
- Lack of court authority to require family to access services

Recommendations

- Ensure the person working directly with the family knows how to gather information and be supportive
- Make the family feel comfortable enough to participate in the process
- Acknowledge the strengths of the family and their important role in the process

Questions to Consider

1. Who is working with the family? Do they know the questions they can ask or feel/think they can ask?
2. Does the family need any support or assistance while the youth is in placement?
3. Who is responsible for connecting the family to services?
4. Who is responsible for paying for family services?
5. Have the family's strengths been identified and built upon?
6. Has the family been given the opportunity to ask for additional resources or services?
7. How are the services been specifically tailored to meet the cultural needs of the family?

AFTERCARE PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

Aftercare Planning & Implementation

A youth's return to their community requires a collaborative approach involving all key stakeholders in a youth's life. As with any group undertaking, a lead agency or individual needs to be identified to ensure all aspects of a youth's aftercare are coordinated and implemented successfully. The leader responsible for aftercare planning may be the youth's probation officer, facility transition staff, the youth's family or a contracted community-based organization.

Outcome

Definition: Youth, families or surrogates and service providers develop an integrated plan with clear roles and responsibilities. They collaborate to provide the services necessary to address a youth's needs.

Result: Youth, families, corrections staff, facilities staff and community-based providers are satisfied with the level of cooperation and communication, and all key individuals are actively involved in the successful implementation and completion of a youth's aftercare plan.

Data Collection: Probation officer or other person responsible for coordinating aftercare services conducts a satisfaction survey with key stakeholders 3 months and 6 months after the youth's discharge date.

Indicators: Satisfaction survey to measure collaboration, information sharing, systems integration, partner involvement, treatment effectiveness, cultural integration, access to services and aftercare plan completion.

Aftercare Roles and Responsibilities

Multiple individuals and systems are involved in a youth's aftercare planning and implementation. Successful coordination and planning requires shared understanding and clarity and communication of roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. The order of the table on page 15 begins with the most involved stakeholder.

AFTERCARE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Stakeholder	General Responsibilities	Pre-Placement	Aftercare Planning	Aftercare
Youth	Complete aftercare program		Participate in creation of aftercare plan	Complete aftercare program
Family	Support youth throughout aftercare process		Participate in creation of aftercare plan	Seek assistance as necessary
Probation	Provide effective case management	Assess needs and develop recommendations and rationale for case management	Communicate with stakeholders and collaborate on completion of goals	Facilitate, monitor and supervise according to collaborative plan
Facility Staff	Develop aftercare plan	Provide input as to placement fit	Lead development of collaborative aftercare plans	Implement aftercare plan
Education Staff	Support youth in school setting and provide a smooth transition during aftercare	Advocate for appropriate placement in least restrictive environment	Seek continuity of education in aftercare plan	Implement the education component of aftercare plan
Health Care Providers	Provide mental, chemical and general health services		Participate in aftercare plan development	Provide outpatient services
Community-Based Providers	Provide services in community			Connect youth to community
Employment Specialists	Provide employment assistance		Participate in aftercare plan development	Provide employment assistance
Human Services	Finance youth placement	Provide placement recommendations	Determine living arrangements	Implement Human Services case plan requirements
Community Members	Help transition from placement to community			Connect youth to community
Judges	Make dispositional decisions			Review case and respond to violations
Public Defenders	Advocate for youth	Recommend court response		Advocate for youth during violation hearings
County Attorneys	Present arguments for placement	Recommend court response		Advocate for state during violation hearings

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN AFTERCARE

Family Involvement in Aftercare Planning

To guarantee the family's successful participation in a youth's aftercare planning, the following must be considered:

Questions to Consider

1. Are there any cultural or ethnic concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the family's successful involvement in the planning process?
2. Does the family need an interpreter to be involved?
3. How are the family's unique strengths and abilities built upon in the aftercare plan?
4. Is the youth's aftercare plan realistic for the family to successfully complete?
5. Does the aftercare plan include resources and referral sources for the family to access once aftercare and the youth's court jurisdiction has ended?

Aftercare Plan Components

Youth need a comprehensive aftercare plan to address all aspects of a life: education, living arrangements, employment, community involvement, recreation and leisure, health care, mental health and chemical health care, monitoring and supervision, family involvement and services, etc.

Living Arrangements

Identifying appropriate living arrangements for a youth prior to transition is crucial for providing a youth the support they need during aftercare.

Outcome

Definition: A youth lives in a safe living arrangement after discharge from placement.

Result: A youth lives in a safe living arrangement (the place the youth calls home).

Data Collection: Probation officer or other person responsible for coordinating aftercare services verifies living arrangements by contacting primary caretaker and youth at intake, discharge, and 6 months after discharge date.

Indicators: Monitor household stability through address verification and support through family or surrogate participation in aftercare meetings.

Responsible Party: *Family/guardian, facility staff, probation staff, Human Services*

Challenges

- Financial challenges to cover living arrangements
- Child protection involvement with youth
- Sex offender registration requirements of youth may exclude youth/family from certain types of housing
- No support at home for youth to return
- No alternative living arrangement if family is unwilling or unable to take youth back
- Youth aging out of child welfare system during placement or at end of placement

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN AFTERCARE

Recommendations

- Work with the family/guardian prior to or at the beginning of placement to identify an expected, appropriate living arrangement when the youth returns
- Initiate advanced planning with all parties to identify appropriate living arrangements well in advance of youth leaving placement
- Identify guardianship or alternative supervision to family early in the planning process and establish it when necessary
- Locate alternative to family for living arrangement if family unable or unwilling to take youth back (extended, friend or adult connection)
- Identify individual to take the lead in securing a safe living arrangement for the youth after placement

Questions to Consider

1. Who is responsible for identifying the youth's living arrangements after placement?
2. Is a youth's current residence available and appropriate?
3. Is the youth involved in the foster care system?
4. How many foster care placements has the youth had?
5. Is the youth aging out of service?
6. Will the youth be entering the child welfare system after placement if living with family is no longer an option?
7. What will be done if no living arrangement is identified for a youth, and they may end up homeless upon leaving placement? Who will connect the youth to appropriate services to prevent long term homelessness?
8. Is the youth placed in the child welfare system as a last resort?
9. Are the proposed living arrangements culturally and linguistically appropriate?
10. Is the youth a parent who needs living arrangements for their children?
11. Does the youth have extended family with whom to live if needed?

EDUCATION

Education

One of the most critical components to promote a youth's successful transition back to their community is education. For many complex reasons, youth needing placement often struggled to achieve academic success and a positive educational experience prior to placement. During placement, many youth improve academically, earn credits toward graduation and are properly academically assessed. The challenge is to identify the appropriate educational placement upon a youth's return to the community and continue the progress made during placement.

A successful educational transition is further complicated by the overrepresentation of youth who qualify for special education services in the juvenile justice system. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 requires schools, detention centers and correctional agencies to identify transition needs, strengths, preferences and interests for all children with disabilities who are eligible for special education and related services.

Outcome

Definition: Regular attendance in an educational program will help youth complete their primary education.

Result: Youth will attend school and work to complete graduation or GED requirements.

Data Collection: Probation officer or other person responsible for coordinating aftercare services contacts the most informed person in a youth's life and school personnel at intake, discharge, and 6 months following discharge date.

Indicators: Evaluation of attendance records, academic performance, course completion, grade level advancement, graduation progress, diploma or GED completion and transition to employment or higher education.

Determine Appropriate Education Placement

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, family/guardian, probation staff, facility school staff, school of residency staff*

Challenges

- The environment in a youth's old school is not supportive of the youth
- The youth has a long history of school failure
- Lack of family, school or general support for the youth
- Low motivation among youth, family and school to help the youth succeed academically
- Substance use by youth that hinders academic success
- Mental health concerns of youth that hinder academic success
- Multiple school enrollments that make earning enough credits, having accurate school records and maintaining grade level difficult

Recommendations

- Identify and engage family, extended family or community to support youth with academic achievement
- Identify one person to advocate for the youth within the school setting
- Identify a setting appropriate for each individual youth not based on assumptions (e.g., "all youth returning from placement need to enroll in an alternative school")
- Provide support in the school setting when a youth returns to encourage and help achieve academic success

Questions to Consider

1. Are there safety issues related to a youth's educational placement, such as present or past gang affiliations, past behavior or negative peer groups that may lead to retribution or continued offending behavior?
2. Has the youth been evaluated for special education services?
3. Does the youth have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? Is it appropriate?
4. Did the youth's IEP team help develop an appropriate, comprehensive and realistic transition plan?
5. Has the youth's IEP team met to discuss implementation of the transition plan?
6. Does the youth have a 504 plan and is it appropriate?
7. Has the youth received the required services during placement?
8. What services does the youth need upon their return to school to succeed both academically and socially?
9. Will transitional services be provided according to federal law to help the youth succeed academically?
10. Where did the youth attend school prior to placement and for how long?
11. Where does the youth want to attend school?
12. Is the youth on track to successfully graduate from high school?
13. Are there any concerns related to past victims of the youth's behavior that need to be explored?
14. Have the youth and their parent/guardian been involved in the education placement decision?
15. Have the individual school and district been involved in the education enrollment decision?

EDUCATION

Transferring Records between Schools

Responsible Party: *Placement school staff, enrollment school staff*

Challenges

- Records are scattered among multiple schools and placements
- Records are not up to date
- Information is missing from youth's school records

Recommendations

- Identify individual to secure up-to-date records from all youth's past educational settings
- Share assessment results and IEP plans with the enrollment school prior to youth leaving placement

Questions to Consider

1. Are the youth's records up to date?
2. Are all of the youth's assessment/testing results up to date?
3. Are the records accurate and pertinent?
4. Who is responsible for transferring the records to a youth's new school?

Enrollment upon Leaving Placement

Responsible Party: *Family/guardian, facility staff, probation staff, social workers*

Challenges

- No one was identified to enroll youth in school after placement
- Youth was not enrolled until back in community, resulting in a gap between educational settings

Recommendations

- Identify individual to enroll youth in a school after placement
- Enroll youth in school prior to leaving placement

Questions to Consider

1. Who will be enrolling the youth in school?
2. Does the youth have transportation to and from school?
3. Does the youth have appropriate clothing to attend school?
4. Does the youth have necessary supplies?
5. Is the youth's schedule determined prior to their first day?
6. Did the youth help choose their schedule?

Credits

Responsible Party: *Facility school, enrollment school*

Challenges

- Youth credits may not transfer from facility to school of enrollment after placement

Questions to Consider

1. How many credits has the youth earned in total and while in placement?
2. Do credits earned in placement transfer successfully to the youth's proposed school upon leaving placement?
3. How many credits does the youth need to earn to graduate?
4. Is the youth at an appropriate grade level in terms of number of credits earned?
5. What is needed to help the youth earn the credits needed to graduate?

Extracurricular Activities

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, family/guardian, youth, probation staff*

Challenges

- Youth unable to participate in extracurricular activities due to behavior and school policies
- Activity leaders and other students do not want youth to return due to past behavior
- Youth unable to participate due to too much time spent away

Recommendations

- Identify extracurricular activities in which youth can participate prior to leaving placement
- Work with school/activity staff to adjust policies to allow youth with juvenile delinquency involvement to participate in school-sponsored activities

Questions to Consider

1. Was the youth involved in extracurricular activities prior to placement?
2. Can the youth continue to participate in those same activities after placement?
3. Are there extracurricular activities in which the youth would like to participate? What are the youth's interests and talents?
4. Does the youth have transportation to participate in extracurricular activities?
5. Can the youth afford participation fees?

EDUCATION

Transition Back to School

Responsible Party: *Facility school, enrollment school*

Challenges

- No designated support person is identified to provide support and guidance within the enrollment school
- Enrollment school staff are not aware of or prepared for the youth's arrival

Recommendations

- Help youth catch up with classmates if behind in classes
- Involve enrollment school staff in navigating a smooth transition for the youth's return
- Prepare school for youth's return, communicating youth's return date and any necessary, ongoing interventions to help the youth succeed in the school setting
- Talk over any concerns or questions teachers or other students may have about the youth's return
- Transfer records and all necessary documentation and set up special education services prior to youth's first day back to school
- Prepare youth for return. Talk about how other students and teachers might react to their return, what to say about their time away and who is there to support them within the school if they need someone to talk to or answer questions
- Duplicate placement structure and programming as closely as possible within the school setting to provide the youth consistency
- Implement a new educational plan that builds on progress youth made in placement

Questions to Consider

1. Who will support the youth in school during their transition?
2. Who will monitor the youth's attendance and performance level after leaving placement?
3. Who will monitor implementation of the youth's IEP or 504 Plan?
4. Did the youth and their family help develop the transition plan?
5. Has the school staff been prepared and notified of the youth's arrival?
6. Have any victims been prepared for the youth's return?
7. What steps are being taken to ensure the youth succeeds in school?
8. Has an individual been identified for the youth to contact if concerns or problems arise during the school day?

Long Term Plans

Responsible Party: *Facility school staff, enrollment school staff, probation staff, school counselor*

Challenges

- Youth does not have enough credits to graduate from high school
- Youth is not exposed to the possibility of attending post-high school education
- Family does not have knowledge of or experience in college admission process
- Youth does not have financial resources to attend college
- Youth not encouraged to attend post-high school education

Recommendations

- Identify youth's long term educational/employment goals
- Encourage youth to pursue higher education/vocational training
- Identify individual to assist youth with admission and financial aid process

Questions to Consider

1. Is the youth on track to graduate from high school?
2. Has the youth met all testing requirements for graduation?
3. Will the youth need to pursue a GED?
4. What does the youth want to do after graduation?
5. Is there a plan in place to help the youth achieve long term education goals?
6. Is the youth enrolled in the appropriate courses, such as advanced placement or college prep?
7. Will the youth's long term education/employment goals be negatively impacted by their juvenile record?
8. Has the potential negative impact of a youth's juvenile record been discussed with them?
9. Has the youth been exposed to possible post-high school education or vocational training opportunities?
10. Has the youth taken the required college admission tests?
11. Is the youth receiving assistance with college admission and financial aid application requirements?

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Youth with Disabilities

In addition to youth receiving special education services, some youth involved in the juvenile justice system have other disabilities needing to be addressed during aftercare planning. Youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, traumatic brain injuries or physical disabilities may be involved in the system. These youth and their families may require additional accommodations and services to help the youth succeed during aftercare.

Determine Service Needs of Youth with Disabilities

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, family, probation staff*

Challenges

- Meeting the complex needs of youth with disabilities in aftercare
- Assuming a youth's needs are met only through an Individual Education Plan
- Disability may make it difficult for a youth to understand the court process, placement and aftercare conditions

Recommendations

- Gather all relevant information on a youth's disability to fully understand their abilities and additional challenges the youth may face during aftercare

Questions to Consider

1. Have the youth's disabilities been appropriately addressed during placement?
2. Has the facility determined the youth has disabilities not identified earlier?
3. Will the youth's disability affect the youth's successful transition back from placement?
4. How will the youth be supported in their reintegration back to their home and community?
5. How will the youth's family be supported prior to and during the youth's reintegration to their home and community?
6. Can the youth's disability impact the youth's ability to comply with the aftercare plan and court requirements?
7. Can the youth's disability impact the youth's ability to stop offending after placement?
8. Does the youth's court order take into consideration the youth's disability and limitations?

Health Care

Many youth involved in the juvenile justice system have mental health and or chemical health needs. Many do not have access to adequate medical care, including preventative or reproductive health. In placement, youth receive consistent health care examinations and screenings and, depending on the facility, may receive mental health and chemical health care services. However, once the youth completes placement and returns home he/she will likely not have consistent access to all aspects of health care. Areas of special concern include:

- Reproductive health (sexuality, birth control, preventing STIs and pre- or post-natal care)
- Preventive care
- Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender issues
- Chronic health care needs (diabetes, epilepsy, neurological disorders, etc.)

Health Care Access

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, mental health providers, chemical health providers, primary health care providers, family*

Challenges

- Family income may prevent youth from accessing private or public health insurance
- Youth or family lacks transportation to follow-up appointments, especially in rural areas
- County does not have funds available to pay for follow-up treatment or care unless youth has insurance
- Youth and family in denial of mental health or chemical health needs and do not continue treatment after placement
- Youth is not motivated to remain sober or drug-free
- Youth's peers or family members encourage youth to continue alcohol and drug use

Recommendations

- Provide access for youth to recommended immunizations and preventative health care according to guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health
- Schedule follow-up mental health, chemical health or primary health care appointments prior to leaving placement
- Fill prescription orders prior to leaving placement
- Identify mental health, chemical health and primary care providers prior to youth leaving placement
- Enroll youth in either public or private insurance prior to leaving placement
- Provide youth's family with access to health care benefits and stable living arrangements
- Involve family in identifying providers and setting up appointments and follow-up care
- Help family learn how to support youth with any follow-up care or treatment needs
- Coordinate stakeholders to ensure follow-up care and treatment is determined and scheduled
- Encourage youth in desire to remain sober or drug free

HEALTH CARE

Health Care Access

Questions to Consider

1. How will the youth's medical care continue throughout the aftercare process?
2. Does the youth have health insurance? What kind?
3. Does the youth need to enroll in an insurance program? Does the youth qualify for publically supported medical care?
4. Was the youth's enrollment in Medicaid suspended upon entering placement and has it been reinstated upon leaving placement?
5. Does the youth have a primary physician?
6. Does the youth have an identified mental health provider?
7. Does the youth have an identified chemical health provider?
8. Does the youth require any immediate or long-term follow-up care?
9. Does the youth require continuation of any medication?
10. Does the youth need reproductive health care?
11. Does the youth need pre- or post-natal care?
12. How will the youth's medical records be transferred to providers after placement?

JOB PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Job Placement and Employment/Community Involvement

For many youth, having a volunteer opportunity or fulfilling employment opportunity provides the positive connection back to the community and aids a successful transition. Yet, securing employment with a juvenile record presents challenges. Youth generally lack sufficient job experience and skills. Their record also may prohibit them from gaining certain types of employment.

Outcome

Definition: Vocation refers to employment, enrollment in a vocational training program or volunteering in the community (for youth who are too young to work).

Result: Youth are employed, enrolled in an employment/vocational training program or volunteering in the community.

Data Collection: Probation officer or other person responsible for coordinating aftercare services contacts youth's primary contact, employer or training program staff at intake, discharge and 6 months after discharge date.

Indicators: Employment, training program enrollment or volunteer records from appropriate supervisor or case worker.

Assessment

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, probation staff*

Challenges

- Youth does not have access to employment assistance programs
- Youth does not have access to employment training
- Few or no employment opportunities are available in a youth's community
- Youth does not have transportation to employment opportunities

Recommendations

- Direct youth to job placement organizations within their community for assistance
- Direct youth to apprenticeship programs within their community
- Direct youth to volunteer opportunities if unable to work

Questions to Consider

1. What are the youth's interests?
2. What are the youth's skills?
3. What is the youth's employment/community involvement history?
4. What are the youth's career or employment goals?
5. Are the youth's goals realistic?
6. Does the youth need to secure paid employment due to financial circumstances?

JOB PLACEMENT/TRAINING

Training

Responsible Party: *Employment specialists*

Challenges

- Training services are not available in a youth's community
- Youth does not have the required level of education/training for employment
- Youth not motivated to work or go through a training program
- Youth lacks transportation to training program
- Family does not support youth's employment training

Recommendations

- Target areas of youth's interest in employment training
- Focus youth training on the following:
 - a. Appropriate dress for work and interviews
 - b. Completing applications for employment
 - c. Creating a resume
 - d. Interview training
 - e. Time management
 - f. How to receive criticism
 - g. How to communicate appropriately and professionally with an employer
 - h. How to discuss their juvenile record
- Participate in role playing exercises to prepare youth for interviews
- Provide youth with one-on-one assistance in their employment search
- Connect youth with a mentor

Questions to Consider

1. What soft skills does the youth need to learn?
2. Does the youth need help with completing applications, preparing for interviews or securing transportation?

Career Plan

Responsible Party: *Employment specialist*

Challenges

- Youth does not have access to assessment and ways to determine specific interests, skills and abilities
- A juvenile's record may deter employers from hiring/partnering with youth

Recommendations

- Partner with a business or organizations to provide youth an opportunity that matches the youth's interests, skills and abilities

Questions to Consider

1. What career path is the youth interested in pursuing?
2. Does the youth need additional education, training or an apprenticeship program to fulfill their career goals?

Volunteer Opportunities

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, probation staff, youth*

Challenges

- Finding opportunities available to youth
- Youth lack's transportation to volunteer opportunities
- Background checks deny youth a chance to volunteer
- Finding both a challenging opportunity and one that meets a youth's interests

Recommendations

- Connect youth with area Volunteer Center to identify opportunities in their community
- Help youth identify interest areas that can match volunteer opportunities
- Help youth volunteer with family members or positive peers

Questions to Consider

1. What are the youth's areas of interest?
2. Does the youth want to work with people, animals or their hands? Indoors or outdoors?
3. How often does the youth want to or have time to volunteer?
4. Does the youth have transportation?
5. What opportunities exist in the youth's community?
6. Who can help the youth contact opportunities?
7. Is the youth prepared to answer questions about their juvenile record?
8. Does the youth have any ideas on how to improve their community?

RECREATION AND LEISURE

Recreation and Leisure

Following principles of positive youth development, connecting youth to positive opportunities and peer groups can build on a youth's strengths, improve a youth's resiliency and provide an alternative to negative behavior or involvement with negative peer groups. Identifying a youth's unique interests, skills and abilities will provide the best chance for success.

Identification of interests

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, youth, family, probation staff*

Challenges

- Youth does not have self-identified interests
- Youth is not motivated to participate in positive activities
- Youth does not have funds available to participate in activities
- Youth's family does not support the youth's participation in positive activities
- A youth's peer group does not support the youth's involvement in positive activities
- Youth lacks transportation to participate in activities
- Positive activities are not available in a youth's community

Recommendations

- Connect youth to positive opportunities while in placement that can continue when the youth leaves placement
- Ensure family supports youth's involvement in positive activities
- Motivate youth to participate in positive activities
- Help youth find positive peer group to socialize with

Questions to Consider

1. What are the youth's interests, skills and abilities?
2. What are the youth's past areas of involvement?
3. Does the youth have a positive peer group with whom to socialize?

Leisure Activity Involvement

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, youth, family, probation staff*

Challenges

- Youth lives far away from or does not have transportation to available activities
- Youth does not have funds to cover participation costs
- Age restrictions limit activities available
- Enrollment barriers prevent youth from participating
- Resources not available in a youth's community

Questions to Consider

1. What organizations/programs has the youth participated in the past?
2. What organizations exist in the youth's community to match a youth's interests?

Independent Living Skills/Youth as Parents

Many youth who leave placement may not be returning home, but to an independent living arrangement either as a result of aging out of placement, the absence of family/guardian or the youth's parental status. These youth will need assistance with acquiring the skills necessary to live and succeed as an adult. Minnesota Statute 245A.22 provides for certain youth to receive vital services in this area.

Identify Youth Independent Living Needs

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, Human Services, youth, probation staff*

Challenges

- Funding not available to cover services youth needs or help youth with basic needs
- Services not available in a youth's community to help the youth live independently
- Youth lacks motivation to live independently
- Absence of supportive adult/family in youth's life

Recommendations

- Identify an adult to provide long-term support for the youth
- Develop the following skills:
 - a. Budgeting
 - b. Financial skills (such as paying rent)
 - c. How to live with roommates/housemates
 - d. Balancing career with other obligations
 - e. Importance of immunization for children
 - f. Community programming for new parents
 - g. Health insurance resources for new parents
 - h. How to access affordable housing
 - i. How to choose child care
 - j. How to register a child for school/kindergarten

Questions to Consider

1. Will the youth be living independently upon leaving placement?
2. What independent living skills does the youth currently have and need to be successful?
3. What services are available in the youth's community to support them in the long term?
4. Is the youth involved in child welfare because they need protective services or because the youth's children need protective services?
5. Can the youth participate in Chafee independent living services?
6. Has an individual been identified to provide long-term support for the youth?
7. Does the youth need and qualify for financial, housing or child care assistance?
Do they need help accessing that assistance?
8. Did the youth help prepare their independent living plan? *(continued on page 32)*

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent Living Skills/Working with Homeless Youth

Questions to Consider *(continued)*

9. What is the involvement of the youth's child's other parent?
10. Does the youth have support to help with parenting or need parenting classes?
11. Does the youth need an ID or driver's license?
12. Does the youth need to apply for emancipation?

Working with Homeless Youth

Responsible Party: *Probation staff*

Challenges

- Funding and/or programming not available to provide services to homeless youth or to prevent youth from becoming homeless after placement

Recommendations

- Secure housing for the youth before he/she leaves placement outside of a homeless shelter
- Develop a timeline and plan to secure housing for the youth if they have not already secured housing prior to leaving treatment to prevent homelessness
- Connect youth to services in their community to prevent homelessness

Questions to Consider

1. How do we help homeless youth in the transition from placement?
2. Has someone been identified to help the youth secure safe housing, financial resources and basic needs?
3. How long is the youth eligible for services?
4. Does the youth have contact with any family member or supportive adult?
5. Is the youth emancipated or does he/she need to apply for emancipation?
6. Does the youth qualify for or have access to health care?
7. Does the youth qualify for services to prevent homelessness?

FAMILY ROLE DURING AFTERCARE

Family Role during Aftercare

Whether a youth is gone for days, weeks, months or longer, the dynamics change within a youth's family. Careful planning must help the family prepare for their return. The family may be uncertain how they feel about their child's return, may be confused about their role when the youth returns, may not understand what happened to their child in placement and may not know how to support their child.

Family Preparation

Responsibly Party: *Facility staff, probation staff, family, youth*

Challenges

- The family does not want the youth to return home after placement
- The youth does not want to return to their family's home after placement

Questions to Consider

1. Does the family want the youth to return and are they prepared for the youth's return?
2. Does the family have a copy of the aftercare plan in a language the family understands?
3. Does the family understand the plan, the consequences of non-compliance and the markers of success for the youth?
4. If the family does not want the youth to return and alternative living arrangements are set up, how will the youth's family be involved in the youth's life during aftercare?
5. If the youth does not want to return, how will the youth be supported during aftercare?

Family Involvement during Aftercare

Responsibly Party: *Facility staff, probation*

Question to Consider

1. How is the family being supported?
2. Who is responsible for supporting the family?
3. Does the family need on-going support to help the youth successfully return?
4. Who will provide the family with on-going support?
5. Are there plans in place if the family needs help during a crisis with the youth or for on-going assistance?
6. Will the family continue to receive services if necessary to help with the youth's successful aftercare?

SUPERVISION/MONITORING/COORDINATION

Supervision/Monitoring/Coordination

Just as youth entry into placement can be disruptive, a return to the community can be equally disruptive. The complexity of aftercare and challenges of successful community reintegration requires a coordinated effort and continuous supervision and monitoring of youth. Who plays this role varies depending on the staffing available from the placement facility and the caseloads of probation officers. Developing a coordinated plan is one crucial piece; monitoring and supporting the youth during aftercare is the other.

Responsible Party: *Facility staff, probation staff, youth, family*

Challenges

- Staff not available to sufficiently monitor a youth during aftercare
- Maintaining coordination of multiple systems and components of the youth's aftercare plan
- Providing youth on-going support during aftercare

Recommendations

- Allow the youth the opportunity to fail and learn from that failure
- Reward the youth for successes and accomplishments
- Do not give youth a disproportionate consequence for failings or learning opportunities
- Use graduated sanctions (rather than immediate return to placement) as a response to probation violations after placement
- Ensure any failures of a youth during aftercare are not solely attributed to the youth
- Do not use only punishment, but look at explanations for why a youth may not be succeeding during aftercare
- Listen to youth's ideas, concerns and challenges the youth is experiencing and support actions and solutions that build on the youth's strengths

Questions to Consider

1. Who will be supporting and monitoring the youth during aftercare and for how long?
2. What are the expectations for the youth during aftercare and have those expectations been clearly communicated to the youth and their family?
3. How will the youth be rewarded for successes and accomplishments?
4. What are the consequences if a youth does not comply with aftercare expectations? Have those consequences been clearly communicated to the youth and their family?
5. Are the identified consequences proportionate and do they allow for the youth to learn from the experience?
6. Is there a clearly defined end to aftercare monitoring and supervision by all parties, and has this information been clearly communicated to the youth and their family?
7. Who may the youth or their youth's family contact for help?
8. Who will track the youth's successes? How will the youth's successes be celebrated?
9. Who will support the youth during aftercare?

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