



An Intensive Treatment and Behavior Modification Program for Youth

Transforming Care and Restoring
Freedom for Troubled Young Adults

Executive Summary

A Department of Juvenile Justice Facility sought solutions to proactively manage disruptive youth in restrictive housing. This Justice Facility collaborated with Falcon experts to develop and implement a treatment-intensive, evidence-based program that integrated concepts of positive behavior interventions. The program was designed for rigorous treatment of violent, maladaptive, and disruptive behavior. The goal of the program was to effectively and proactively manage youth who displayed consistently disruptive behaviors that became difficult to manage in a regular housing unit.

This program was structured using a multidisciplinary team and evidence-based treatment approach that included Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**, and concepts of **Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ)** models. Data showed about 20% of youth in the facility accounted for 80% of disruptive behaviors. These youth refused to comply with rules and conventional interventions, creating an environment that distracted from rehabilitation of other youth in school, groups, and shared living environments.

The program served as a short-term residential treatment-like setting within the confines of the facility that offered wider ranges of placement options to address consistently aggressive and disruptive behaviors of targeted youth. Targeting youth to receive intensive behavioral interventions and cognitive restructuring in a safe and secure environment promoted a more positive climate within the facility and reduced the need for temporary confinement.

The Falcon Approach To A Youth Behavior Modification Program

A multidisciplinary team approach was used with a Unit Team consisting of Educators, Mental Health Professionals, Juvenile Justice Specialists, Juvenile Justice Youth and Family Specialists. Other departmental staff also played key roles in the implementation and sustainability of this program. In structuring the program and roles of each department, the team:

- Selected and designated an appropriate unit with the assistance of Falcon experts.
- Used full-time teachers to provide education on the unit.
- Chose a select group of security staff based on its commitment to the goals of the program,

ability to communicate and work with program staff, and to utilize a firm, fair and consistent approach when engaging with youth. Security staff was assigned consistently to this program on all shifts and all times.

- Provided behavioral health services on the unit.
- Assigned Youth and Family Specialists to the unit who made contact with youth throughout the work week.
- Obtained approvals from members of the Facility Programs Team for all program assignments for all youth.
- Set up a data collection system to maintain the integrity of the program, and tracked program success, including: number of youth in the program, length of time in the program, Youth Behavior File, Youth Disciplinary Reports before and after program completion, and return to the program.
- Regularly assessed the efficacy of the program and reported to Facility Administration.

Programmatic Concepts:

1) Created a Safe and Orderly Environment

- Rules and expectations were clearly defined, taught, modeled, and reinforced. Youth orientation was held each week for all new youth to the unit. All team staff participated in the orientation process.
- Unit team and program procedures included safe peer and staff interactions.

2) A daily schedule that provided for:

• Education

- There was strong focus on emotional learning and moral development to prepare youth for full program participation.
- Academics were provided individually and in small group settings on the unit.

• Behavioral Health

- Individual and group therapy modules using Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) were used. This intervention is a 16- step group modality, cognitive- behavioral restructuring approach, which includes 1:1 therapeutic support. MRT is dually designated as an evidence-based treatment for Mental Health and Substance Abuse populations.

• Recreation Opportunities

- Youth were encouraged to participate in structured exercises that addressed physical and emotional therapy.

3) Focus on Strength

- Staff identified strengths in youth and made every effort to cultivate these strengths. As youth progressed through the program, staff recognized youth efforts through verbal acknowledgments and behavioral level system rewards.

4) Consistent and Progressive Discipline

- Youth and Family Specialists were appointed as hearing officers for all Youth Disciplinary Referrals.
- There was a strong focus on learning environments in order to facilitate long-term sustained changes in behavior of youth.
- All members of the unit team received ongoing training to ensure consistency in reinforcing and sanctioning youth behavior.

5) Focus to Reintegrate Youth

- This program was designed to help youth progress from a more restrictive environment with intensive interventions to full transition back to their original housing units and program assignments.

Youth Selection:

A Committee consisting of representatives from Clinical Services, Juvenile Justice Services, Mental Health Services, and other relevant departments reviewed youth referrals. If youth had an existing Mental Health Counselor, that counselor was consulted on the advisability of placing the youth in the program. The facility Chief Administrative Officer (Superintendent) made final determinations of youth participating in the program. Once the youth was placed in the program, the Unit Team reviewed progress weekly.

Areas of behavior considered for program entry:

- Staff Assault
- Youth Assault
- Multiple Fights
- Ongoing Disruption of School and Non-Compliance with Rules and Directives
- Multiple Youth Disciplinary Reports
- Ongoing Hypersexual Behavior
- Inappropriate Anger-Coping Skills

Assessments for youth entering the program came from multiple sources: Review of master files/mental health files for psychological or psychiatric assessments and the YASI or the JAIS. Reviews also consisted of education files from school psychology strength-based assessments such as the BASC, the Connors, or the Comprehensive Behavior Identification Scale. Mental health staff or a school psychologist administered any additional needed assessments.

Program Procedure:

The program was structured in three graduated levels (a behavioral level system was created). Youth were required to undergo specific programming in order to move from one level to the next within the program, through a weekly staffing process. Weekly staffings or meetings included the Unit Team and youth. The Unit Team reported on youth's progress, reviewed the Youth Behavior File, and encouraged youth's continued participation in the process. The outcome of these meetings included a progressive plan for the youth, long and short-term goal setting, and assignment of the youth's level for the next week.

Other Program Procedures

- The Superintendent determined the number of youth.
- Youth was assigned as single bunk only.
- Minimum length of stay on the unit was nine weeks - three weeks at each level.
- No youth were presented for release to the Parole Board from the unit.
- Youth could order commissary while on the unit.
- Youth used only facility-provided products while on the unit.
- Each program created and implemented its own behavior level system.
- Youth was assigned to one living unit and was not able to move until program completion.
- Youth earned reinforcements through the behavior level system. Reinforcements included social activities, extra gym time, and time for pleasure reading.
- No cards or gambling.
- Youth spent time out of the room or idle time on homework assignments or reading appropriate books. Physical exercise was a big part of the program.
- Youth was integrated into the facility school program. The unit team determined the success of the youth in this setting through review of data provided by the school.
- It was critical that all groups, classes, and staffings were held as scheduled, even if substitute staff were assigned.

Behavioral Level System

A Youth Behavior File was maintained and kept on the unit for review at weekly staffing meetings to track the youths' progress. This file included a weekly behavior point sheet, reported behaviors that resulted in positive reinforcement and/or sanctions, and weekly staffing notes and reports.

Red Level: Entering Youth and Non-Progressing Youth

- Education and Mental Health assessed these youth for programming. Further assessments and evaluations were conducted if no apparent progress.
- Intensive, or targeted objectives and goals pursued for those youth not meeting program requirements.
- Minimum requirement for youth to remain at this level is three weeks. After the third week in the program, if youth earns Red Level points and is promoted by the Unit Team, then youth progresses to Yellow Level.

Yellow Level: Youth Making Progress in the Program

- Youth continues with assigned programs and is held accountable for participation.
- Minimum requirement for youth to remain at this level is three weeks. After the third week in the program, if youth earns Yellow Level points and is promoted by the Unit Team, then youth progresses to Green Level.

Green Level: Youth Demonstrating Progress that Nears Program Completion

- Youth begins a transition period. Youth transitions back to school and wing activities. The Unit Team and youth develop the transition plan at a weekly staffing.
- There is a minimum of two weeks of successful school probation after which the Unit Team may refer youth to the Committee for promotion to regular living units.
- When not in school or participating in regular wing activities, youth continues to participate in group therapies and counseling.

Program Completion

- There was no defined time for the youth to complete the program. Youth worked through the program at each level and earned their way back to their original housing wing and program assignment.

- Each youth successfully completed their transition plan developed while on the Green Level.
- While on the Green Level, each youth prepared a statement of contrition that he presented to the Unit Team and youth peers at his previous weekly staffing.
- The Unit Team decided program completion for each youth during this weekly staffing.
- The Unit Team referred any programming change for the youth for Committee approval.
- Upon completion of the program, the youth was eligible for a reduction in set time.

Integration of MRT Programming into Behavioral Level System

- MRT was integrated with the Behavioral Level Systems.
- Each youth moves through three behavioral levels at the rate of 3-4 weeks stay at each level.
- Youth graduation from each level depends on acquisition and maintenance of points based on award system associated with youth behavior in school and the unit, compliance with rules, etc.
- Graduation from each level required youth to successfully obtain and maintain points for 3-4 weeks and successfully complete X steps of MRT.



ABOUT FALCON EXPERTS

Falcon brings together some of the most distinguished, credentialed leaders in the field with a singular clarity of vision. We aim to elevate behavioral health services within the correctional industry to ensure real, sustainable results for families, communities and society as a whole. Our decades of experience deliver an approach that's disciplined, focused and innovative. With every challenge, we seek partners who share our dedication to transforming mental health services for the inmates in their care.

Falcon reimagines the jails and prisons of the future, built on foundational learning environments that promote change and opportunity. Through proven, safe, and progressive programs, we are passionately committed to helping inmates succeed upon release. And this optimism is at the core of how we tackle every problem - believing that no matter how challenged the system or inmate, transformation is possible when care is innovative, restorative and implemented with both passion and unparalleled expertise.