

Policy Considerations: Behavior Support Plans

The intent of this policy consideration is to evoke discussion within your jurisdiction regarding best practices and key elements to include in policies and procedures. Jurisdictions should consider these policies in the context of their unique juvenile justice system structure; state and local mandates; risk tolerance level; and other individual needs.

Throughout the policy considerations the acronym “PP” is used. This stands for “policy and/or procedure.”

General

- The PP has a clear statement that describes the importance and intent of the policy and/or procedure and/or how it relates/ties to the agency’s mission.
- The PP includes clear definitions of key concepts in the policy and/or procedure (i.e. can be understood, differences between related words/concepts are clear, etc.) – Behavior Support Plan (BSP), etc.
- The PP mentions how staff will be trained on relevant topic areas – new employee and ongoing training.
- The PP clearly describes an effective quality assurance process such as include quarterly case file reviews, annual onsite audits, regular performance evaluations from supervisors, staff skills assessments and training, etc.
- The PP includes a description of how the agency will use data to ensure it is meeting targets required by the policy and/or procedure area (i.e. indicators of success, how often these data will be reviewed, how the data will be used and by whom, etc.).
- The PP will be available to staff for review.
- The PP reviewed for revision/modifications at least annually.

Purpose of Support Plans

- The PP clearly states the goal of a Behavior Support Plan (BSP) is to address a youth’s repeated harmful or significantly disruptive behavior (as evidenced by incident reports and frequent rule infractions) and return him/her to regular programming as soon as possible, if applicable.
- The PP states that the BSP should be closely linked to the youth’s existing case plan and treatment goals.

Developing the Support Plan

- The PP explains in what circumstances a Behavior Support Plan should be developed (i.e. when other supportive interventions have not been effective).
- The PP requires a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) consisting of a diverse representation of professionals (i.e. mental health clinician, behavior coordinator, education staff, treatment unit manager, direct care staff, etc.) be responsible for developing a written/electronic BSP to support youth.

- The PP requires the youth and parent/guardian (or a positive support individual) be included in the development of the BSP.
- The PP directs staff to use an agency form, template, or electronic record system when developing the BSP.
- The PP requires if the youth is on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a representative from education that is familiar with the youth (consistent to the extent appropriate) is involved in the development of the BSP.
- The PP requires a higher-level administrator to approve (and/or provide feedback) on the BSP within 24 hours.
- The PP states areas that must be addressed in the BSP including but not limited to: Current youth behaviors (i.e. frequency of disruptions); causes and purposes of the behaviors; physical, medical, and mental health needs; strengths/protective factors; interventions and supports that have worked in the past; positive rewards and incentives to support youth; measurable goals and timelines; and detailed plan for youth to rejoin general population, if applicable.

Implementing the Support Plan

- The PP directs designated staff to review the BSP with youth. The youth shall receive a copy of the BSP.
- The PP requires youth to sign the plan acknowledging s/he understands the contents and confirming that s/he understands his/her right to file a grievance regarding the BSP.
- The PP directs designated staff to distribute a copy of the BSP to the necessary staff members within 24 hours of the plan being reviewed with youth.
- The PP directs all staff involved in the youth's care to adhere to the BSP and track youth behaviors, rewards, and consequences consistently.
- The PP requires designated staff to notify the parent/legal guardian within 24 hours of the BSP completed and to review the plan with the parent/legal guardian.

Reviewing the BSP

- The PP requires the MDT to review youth progress and the BSP a minimum of weekly (more often as needed).
- The PP requires a designated MDT member to document the discussion and decisions regarding the BSP and directs staff where to document this information.
- The PP requires a designated MDT member to update the BSP based on MDT discussions and communicate any changes to the BSP to staff responsible for caring for youth.
- The PP informs staff how and when to close out the BSP (i.e. once youth has achieved his/her goals; document in electronic health record; etc.)
- The PP requires designated staff to communicate the completion of the BSP to the appropriate staff.
- The PP requires designated staff to notify the parent/legal guardian that the youth has completed the BSP and inform the parent/legal guardian of next steps.