

How to Sustain Youth & Family Wellbeing IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Full Frame Initiative defines wellbeing as the needs and experiences universally required in combination and balance to weather challenges and have health and hope. All people are hardwired for wellbeing, which is particularly crucial during stress and times of change. Focusing on the Five Domains of Wellbeing creates a foundation to mitigate or address tradeoffs that are amplified during crisis and supports strategies that sustain wellbeing.

WELLBEING DOMAIN	STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
<p>Social Connectedness</p> <p>Key aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and diversity of relationships (there's no magic number). • Having people we can count on and people who count on us. • A sense of belonging. • Relationships foster growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure alternative ways for young people to connect with families and community. • Involve young people in activities that support social connectedness. • Have conversations with young people about the importance of social connectedness and get ideas from them about how to stay connected. • Communicate and connect with families about changes in policies for visits. • Develop plans and tailored policies to ensure youth and families are able to safely maintain contact during the crisis. • Ensure all staff, families and youth know about the plans and policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and/or extend phone calls, FaceTime. • Create cards or write letters and send to loved ones or those who may be vulnerable to social isolation. • Set up regular non-face-to-face contacts with families to give updates on their young people. • Have community partners/members send cards or messages to confined young people. • Use social media to allow young people to communicate with the broader community. They can stage a debate, webinar, or performance.
<p>Stability</p> <p>Key aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchors (small weekly or daily routines) that create a sense of predictability. • Familiarity. • Buffer that keeps small problems from snowballing into big problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If space needs to be reconfigured in the facility for health and safety reasons, include the youth in the process. • Take an inventory with youth about the rhythms of the days and what is important to them. • Adapt and maintain daily schedules (e.g. education, treatment). • Create alternative educational and treatment plans to account for staff absences. • Talk to young people about what is going on and how it impacts them, their families and friends. • Create rituals that can provide stability for young people. • Continue regular or increase contact with families using alternatives to face-to-face interaction. • Create options for youth to continue to practice their faith and meet their religious and spiritual needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task the educational team with creating online academic options for young people. • In residential care: • Ensure daily check-ins with young people. • Develop daily goals. • Facilitate morning or evening gratitude discussions with young people. Model the practice by participating with them.

Safety

Key aspects:

- Not at heightened risk of physical or emotional harm.
- From people, places and systems.
- Ability to be true to core identity without harm or danger.

- Ensure plans to maintain appropriate staff-to-student ratios.
- Maintain any therapeutic and counseling sessions and programs. As needed use alternatives to face-to-face interaction.
- Address the fear young people may have about them or their loved ones getting the virus. Staff will be coming in and out of the facility, and young people may be concerned that staff could transmit the illness.
- Understand the young people will have different reactions to the crisis, and it may trigger previous trauma responses.
- Talk to young people and families about how the facility/program will be kept safe.
- Educate young people and families about program, local, state and federal COVID-19 guidelines, rules and mandates.
- Ensure the physical site is structured to support any needed changes to create emotional and physical safety. Include youth in the process.

- Send communications to all families/guardians about the organization's safety plans during the crisis and provide updates.
- Provide families with important information about the crisis.
- Ensure families have a way to contact the system or their young people for updates.

Mastery

Key aspects:

- Effort put into something influences the outcome.
- Outcome is desired and possible given circumstances, but not guaranteed.
- Sense of choice.
- Sense that we can influence, not necessarily control, our environment, future and/or relationships.

- Encourage young people to be active participants in making a positive difference during the crisis for themselves and others.
- Focus on making progress on treatment and educational goals.
- Develop friendly, fun, treatment-oriented games that develop a sense of mastery.
- Create developmentally appropriate opportunities for youth to make choices that provide them with a sense of influence and an impact on outcomes.

- Task youth councils with recommending positive activities during "lockdown."
- Team young people with staff to develop tips, posters or handouts with COVID-19 safety protocols (e.g. the proper way to wash hands).
- Identify songs, raps, or poems young people can sing while washing their hands for 20 seconds.
- Learn a new skill from each other or through Youtube.

Meaningful Access to Relevant Resources

Key aspects:

- Self-determination of what basic needs are relevant and important.
- Resources exist.
- Resources are accessible without shame, danger or significant hardship.

- Ensure young people have access to necessary medications.
- Ensure access to educational services.
- Create a plan for increased access to therapeutic, family and other counseling services as needed.
- Talk to families about their challenges getting access to resources and work to connect them with needed resources.
- Create space for young people to share their concerns about their families' difficulties accessing resources.

- Provide families and young people with emergency contact numbers.
- Develop plans for young people and families in to get access to resources that may be impacted by the crisis.
- Allow young people to have phone contact with their religious/spiritual advisors or mentors.



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The Full Frame Initiative is a social change organization that partners with a growing cohort of pioneering organizations, systems and communities across the country to fundamentally shift their focus from fixing problems to fostering wellbeing – the needs and experiences essential for health and hope. Together, we are creating possibilities for lasting change in people's lives and sparking a broader movement that replaces poverty, violence, trauma and oppression with wellbeing and justice.

We hope our materials are useful to you. If you would like to adapt them or use them for your own work, please be in touch with us first. We may have insights or updates to share. ©2015-2020 The Full Frame Initiative