



Spring Bulletin

Spring 2011

Improving the lives of youth

Annual Customer Survey

Each year Rite of Passage conducts a customer satisfaction survey in keeping with its commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement. This year Sycamore Canyon Academy showed high marks in *Case Management, Family Visitation Workshops, Operations and Direct Care Staff.*

The areas from the Customer Survey for Sycamore Canyon Academy that showed there were areas for improvement included *Quality of Admissions Packet, Individual and Family Counseling.*

Rite of Passage Sycamore Canyon Academy uses the information from the survey to implement improved processes, policies, and procedures to constantly improve the services provided to the student, the student's family, and the placing agency.

Since receiving the most recent results, Sycamore Canyon Academy is using the information to continue to make programmatic changes that will facilitate better outcomes for the students at Sycamore Canyon Academy. Rite of Passage, Sycamore Canyon Academy, will focus on its continued implementation of evidence-based practices to lower recidivism by targeting risk and protective factors of students, as well as family reunification and transition services. This in turn will enhance student success as they transition back to their communities or move on to higher education.

Status Students Experience Life on a College Campus

On March 8th, 2011, the status students at Sycamore Canyon Academy went to tour the University of Arizona campus. When we first arrived, we were amazed by how many students attended the school. Our tour guide was Alex Nunez, a sophomore at the University. We were told that Arizona residents paid significantly less in tuition than out-of-state students.



Sycamore Students enjoy tour at University of Arizona campus

We toured the campus library where there are eleven million volumes of books! We were also able to go into

the dorm rooms where students stay when they're not in class. Our tour guide told us that he only spends a couple hours a day in his dorm for sleep. Some people normally go in their dorms right after their classes were done to go study for an exam or important test. There were two roommates in the dorms and they are a mix of male, male, female, female.

After we viewed the dorms we were introduced to, "The Blue Light", a special button for emergencies only. We were told that it takes only a few minutes for the campus Police Department to find out where you were because when the button was pressed, Campus PD could track where you were. Overall, we enjoyed our tour of the school campus. Most of us agreed that U of A would be our choice for higher level learning.

Contributing Writer S/A Black

Conservation Project Brings Experiential Learning To Students

Our conservation project took place at the Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium, which is located on the University of Arizona campus. The experience began with us playing the tricky brain teasers, then with a screen that made you look distorted, and finally a machine that made your shadow stay on the wall.

We then went downstairs to view the minerals of different rock from volcanoes all around the world. We were able to match our birth month to the rock it represented. While looking at the rocks we were able to hold \$25,000 dollars worth of gold. The tour guide told us that the gold had come from a mountain in Arizona.

Many of the student athletes had their own favorite rock. For example, my favorite rock was called, Azurite. Azurite has a variety of multi-colors on the rock itself and is formed in



Flandrau Science Center at University of Arizona

volcanoes. Student athlete CoCrofts' favorite rock was called, Smithsonite. He says he likes the color on the rock and the way it forms.

We finished the day up playing one of the mind games in the other room. Overall, we enjoyed our time at the museum and learned a lot from this experience.

Contributing Writer S/A Moten

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is only effective when it is well-designed and implemented in a way that maintains program integrity (Lowenkamp 2004). In fact, research indicates that poorly implemented EBP may not only be ineffective in reducing recidivism, it may actually increase recidivism rates (Latessa & Lowenkamp 2006; Washington State Institute for Public Policy 2004).

To enhance its implementation efforts, Rite of Passage started a new company-wide initiative called "Focus on Fidelity." The goal of this initiative is to implement EBP and systems that effectively deliver programs with fidelity to research-based guidelines and continuous quality improvement (CQI).

This is accomplished using the APIC model - Assess, Plan, Identify, and Coordinate. At Rite of Passage this model is used from the time the youth arrives until they are transitioned back into their community.

To begin with, staff use motivational interviewing (MI), an evidence-based technique for effective intervention, during the assessment process. This assists in reducing student anxiety and helps students overcome negative emotions regarding behavior changes. The assessment also follows research guidelines by measuring for static and dynamic risk factors and criminogenic needs, and by being validated on juvenile populations similar to those at Rite of Passage.

Next, staff identify the top three risk factors from the assessment process, and develop a Measured Achievement Plan (MAP) for each individual youth which is linked to the youth's criminogenic risk factors, education, and career

technical education needs. This allows students to focus on reducing their risk factors which in turn is proven to lower recidivism. It also allows students to focus on protective factors during their stay which in turn provides students with new skills for dealing with difficult situations once they return home.

Last, staff and students begin building a transition plan 90-120 days prior to returning home so that the youth at Rite of Passage have a plan when they leave. Staff provide resources, continued positive skill development classes, and higher education opportunities.

Current studies conducted by the University of Cincinnati show continued reductions in recidivism when at-risk youth in placement receive effective transition services. Research on the Dual Role Relationships Inventory-Revised has suggested that relationship quality in mandated treatment involves caring and fairness, trust, and an authoritative (not authoritarian) style (Skeem, Eno Loudon, Polaschek, and Camp, 2007).

To assure that the programs implemented at Rite of Passage have the greatest effect, a CQI component is in the implementation process for 2011.

Continuous Quality Improvement is more than a quality assurance program. CQI provides an ongoing analysis of program implementation and determines where a program is strong, and where there are areas for improvement. The definition of CQI is: A system that seeks to improve the provision of services with an emphasis on future results. Like total quality management, CQI uses a set of statistical tools to

understand subsystems and uncover problems, but its emphasis is on maintaining quality in the future, not just controlling a process. Once a process that needs improvement is identified, a team of knowledgeable individuals is gathered to research and document each step of that process. Once specific expectations and the means to measure them have been established, implementation aims at preventing future failures and involves the setting of goals, education, and the measurement of results. If necessary, the plan may be revised on the basis of the results, so that the improvement is ongoing (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2009). So, through implementation of evidence-based practices, training for key staff to assure fidelity of the practices being implemented, and

Rite of Passage Implementation & Continuous Quality Improvement



Working as a Team to continually improve the process

continuous quality improvement systems in place, Rite of Passage will provide a program which is dedicated to improving the lives of at-risk youth by lowering their rate of recidivism, and providing positive skills that will assist them in achieving their goals.

Works Cited

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