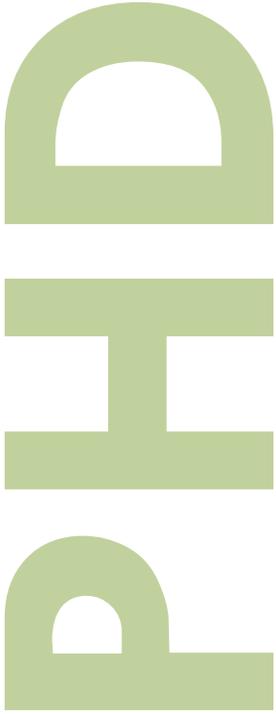


# POSITIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## AT A GLANCE

Oregon Youth Authority | January 2019



## The Developmental Approach

Positive youth development is a national, research-based model for working with youth. It emphasizes creating positive environments to help youth develop their natural talents in educational and vocational pursuits, as well as skills in emotional regulation, decision-making, and cooperation. Youth are encouraged to set high expectations for themselves and their peers.

When OYA adopted this model in 2014, the agency extended the same ideas to employees' interactions with

each other. Thus, "Positive Human Development," or PHD, was born.

OYA leaders and staff work daily to create safe environments where caring, supportive relationships can thrive, where youth and staff are held accountable, and where everyone participates meaningfully in their community. Staff have learned to look beyond what a youth has done or what has happened to them, and instead to focus on nurturing youths' individual skills and talents.

## »» What the Research Says

- **Therapeutic approaches** are more effective at reducing youth reoffending than punitive ones.
- **Adolescents have less capacity than adults** for self-regulation in emotionally charged situations, and are less able to consider the future impact of their judgments and decisions.
- **Witnessing traumatic events** can impact a child's brain — but the effects can be reversed with the right treatment, including stable relationships with a caring adult.

## »» Recent Work at OYA

- **Leading for Change:** Ongoing training in 2017 and 2018 helped OYA managers learn how to model and support a PHD approach with their staff.
- **Fundamental Practices:** Released in 2018, this guide gives facility staff practical, specific examples of how to employ the tenets of PHD.
- **PHD Training Phase 2:** In 2019, OYA managers will train their staff on best practices for working with youth and each other.

**Research Sources:** "The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders," M. W. Lipsey, 2009; "Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach," National Research Council, 2013; "Defining Child Traumatic Stress," *Changing Minds*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.



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### MISSION

OYA protects the public and reduces crime by holding youth accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

### VISION

Youth who leave OYA go on to lead productive, crime-free lives.

### VALUES

Integrity  
Professionalism  
Accountability  
Respect

# THE PHD PYRAMID



\* **All levels of the pyramid** need youth, staff, and partners working together — with a solid agency infrastructure and positive physical environments supporting them — to achieve youth success.

## Aligning Buildings with PHD



Research in juvenile brain development shows that positive physical environments better support rehabilitation. OYA is working to upgrade old buildings and build new ones that foster healing and reflect our PHD culture.

**Learn more in OYA's video, "Letting in the Light":** [bit.ly/lettinginthelight](https://bit.ly/lettinginthelight)

## What the Research Says

- **Natural settings** can alleviate the adverse effects of children's exposure to chronic stress.
- **Noise and light** significantly affect people's visual and tactile senses and sense of safety.
- **Lighting, finishing materials, and floor patterns** have strong impacts on those who experience mental illness.
- **Noise, crowding, and high density** can lead to more stress and poorer cognitive and social functioning.

**Sources:** "The effect of physical environment on mental wellbeing," Rachel Cooper, Christopher Boyko and Ricardo Codinhoto, 2009; "The Effects of the Physical Environment on Children's Development," Cornell University.