

# PAROLE AND PROBATION: A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH AT A GLANCE

Oregon Youth Authority | February 2021



Positive youth development is a national, research-based model for working with youth. It emphasizes creating safe environments where caring, supportive relationships can thrive, where youth and staff are held accountable, and where everyone participates meaningfully in their community.

Staff are encouraged to help youth acknowledge the impact of what they have done while also recognizing the

factors that have contributed to where they are today. By understanding how youth come to us — with a focus on equity and recognition of historical traumas related to their identities — we can meet youth where they are as we help them build on their individual skills and talents.

At OYA, this model extends the same ideas to employees' interactions with each other. We call it Positive Human Development, or PHD.

## OYA Parole and Probation

Every youth in OYA custody has a juvenile parole/probation officer (JPPO) assigned to their case for the duration of their time in custody.

Our JPPOs partner with others in OYA facilities, in residential programs, or in their local communities to help ensure that youth receive the right services, in the right places, at the right time.

JPPOs also partner with youth and families to create an individualized plan and goals for each youth's rehabilitation.

Their critical role in case planning means that the developmental approach is an invaluable part of their work.



## >> What the Research Says

- **Approaches that balance accountability and support are more effective** in reducing the chance a youth commits new crimes.
- **When a youth feels they have a positive relationship** with their parole or probation officer, they are more likely to change their behavior over the long term.
- **Collaborating with the youth, their family, and their community** strengthens the youth's support system and is more effective in reducing criminal behavior than approaches that focus only on the youth.
- **Young people whose families and other caring adults have high hopes for them** have greater self esteem, try harder, perform better academically, and are more hopeful about future employment.
- **Interventions are most effective when youth have opportunities** to safely learn and practice new skills, develop strong and positive social attachments, and create positive community connections. These interventions need to happen in "normal" environments that are safe for everyone involved.



**Oregon Youth Authority**  
530 Center St. NE, Suite 500  
Salem, OR 97301-3777  
503-373-7205  
oregon.gov/OYA

### 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

# DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH IN PAROLE AND PROBATION

## What does it look like?



### Just and Equitable Services

- **Advocating for equitable practices** for youth in the justice system, and actively addressing practices and responses that contribute to inequities.
- **Having open conversations** about how impacts of racial, cultural, or gender inequities and disparities have impacted youth. Providing youth and their caregivers opportunities to discuss these issues.
- **Ensuring the quality and quantity of contacts** with youth are based on their individual needs, and not impacted by staff's personal or unconscious biases.



### Positive Relationships

- **Developing a strong working alliance** between staff and youth that is based in trust and respect.
- **Creating a supportive meeting structure** by asking youth about their interests, strengths, and progress toward goals.
- **Making efforts to learn about the youth's experiences, background, and culture** to help build a supportive relationship.



### Setting Clear Expectations

- **Setting reasonable expectations** that take into account the youth's current situation while also challenging them to rise to their full capabilities.
- **Connecting the youth with culturally relevant and equitable supports** that meet the youth's needs and help them fulfill the expectations we give them.
- **Using a positive and encouraging manner** to support youth in learning from their mistakes.



### Reinforcement and Consequences

- **Building in opportunities to reinforce progress** and address areas for growth or improvement. Providing incentives that promote positive development.
- **Using a strengths-based perspective**, focusing on the youth's individual strengths and encouraging the development of new skills, interests, and goals.
- **Ensuring that our responses are immediate, proportionate and fair** when youth do not meet the expectations. Tailoring the response to the youth's needs, to promote positive changes.



### Building Support Systems

- **Providing youth the opportunity** to identify their supportive adults. These support people may not always be traditional caregivers.
- **Reinforcing relationships with supportive people** who genuinely care, challenge growth, empower the youth, provide accountability, and support the youth through difficult times.
- **Engaging youth and families in conversations** where they have equal opportunities to be heard and their goals are incorporated into case planning.



### Connecting Youth with Services and Resources

- **Connecting youth with skill-building opportunities** that promote positive social development. This includes education programs, work experience, skills training, and positive activities focused on the youth's strengths and skills.
- **Connecting youth with culturally responsive services** that understand and respect the youth's and their caregivers' diverse backgrounds, values, and beliefs.
- **Connecting youth to positive adults and mentors in their community**, and using interventions that focus on attachment, family, and community connection.