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NOJOS Level Eight: Secure Care/ Correctional Sex-Specific Treatment Enhanced

Client Profile

Level Eight youth have displayed repetitious, predatory, fixated and/or violent patterns of sexual offending, use of force or weapons in their offenses and/or a propensity to sexually act out with same-aged peers in addition to younger victims. Level Eight youth may also display other criminality or non-sexual aggression that makes them too risky to maintain in a community placement. These youth also present with antisocial-interpersonal orientation or conduct disorder behaviors that render them unable or unwilling to follow the structure and rules of community-based programs. Some of these youth often have a prior treatment history and have failed in previous less restrictive placements and intensive treatment settings (which may have resulted in additional legal charges). Overall, secure care youth present an extreme risk to the community. Primary factors to consider are the higher frequency and degree of severity of the behaviors and/or the extended length of time the youth has exhibited these behaviors and their limited amenability to supervision and less restrictive treatment alternatives.

Secure facilities are the most restrictive and highest NOJOS level of care. These facilities are the most securely confined settings provided for youth who commit repetitive sexual and/or non-sexual-assault behaviors. Secure facilities are for serious and habitually delinquent youth. They have high security and multiple barriers preventing escape.

Delinquent youth are not sentenced for a specific length of time, but their stay is based on the guidelines established by the Youth Parole Authority. The Youth Parole Authority conducts regular progress reviews and determines when the youth can be released. Once the juvenile court orders a delinquent youth to a secure facility, the authority for the youth is transferred to the Youth Parole Authority. It is strongly recommended that each youth complete an individually designed treatment plan based on their risk and rehabilitative needs, including where applicable court-ordered victim restitution as part of the requirements for release.

Youth In Care (YIC) academic teachers, who are employed by the school districts, hold daily classes for youth. Schoolwork finished in secure facilities is credited to the youth's regular academic record. [See [Secure Care Services](#)]

Treatment Focus and Goals

Youth in locked correctional settings, present the greatest risk and need for intensive treatment intervention in order to rehabilitate and return to a more normative path of development. For those youth with adjudicated sexually abusive behaviors, sex-specific treatment is strongly recommended and should be based on the youth's individual needs and responsivity. (David S. Prescott and Robert E. Longo, *Current Perspectives: Working with Young People Who Sexually Abuse*, Current Perspectives: Working with Sexually Aggressive Youth & Youth With Sexual Behavior Problems, Longo, Robert E. & Prescott, David S., Editors, NEARI Press, 2006, page 53-54).

The treatment goals for Level Eight should focus on increasing the youth's adaptive levels of functioning behaviorally, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and psychologically. In addition to these goals, the youth should improve their executive functioning, social competence and relatedness, use of social skills in demonstrating mastery in their environment, as well as stabilization of behavior in social, school and home setting.

Treatment Modalities

Importantly, secure facilities should augment correctional programming with targeted sex-specific treatment modalities similar to a Level Six program including targeted sex-specific weekly individual therapy and group therapy to provide the youth with information regarding healthy sexual functioning and prevent further development of his/her sexual deviancy. Further, because family issues are typically a significant part of Level Eight youths' problems, it is strongly recommended (where possible) that family therapy be provided on a regular basis. With older adolescents, individuation issues should be addressed to assist the youth to grow toward young adulthood, emancipation, and eventually independent living.

Treatment should include sex education and healthy-sexuality work, life-skills training, social skills and relationship skills, and competency skill development training, and where applicable, independent-living skills, and psychiatric/medication management services. A psychosexual-education emphasis is recommended to provide the youth with information regarding maturation, human development and the current laws and social values and mores regarding sexual boundaries and healthy age-appropriate sexual conduct.

Given a higher percent of these youth present with histories of childhood abuse, neglect, exposure to sexual violence and disruptions in care givers, trauma-specific treatment is **strongly recommended** and should also be available for all youth who present with unresolved trauma. Further, it is strongly recommended these youth have opportunities to resolve their own childhood victimization with sensory interventions *separate from* focus on their sexual offending to assist them to resolve their trauma, enhance emotional coping skills and the development and integration of a healthy sexual and prosocial identity.

Monitoring

Secure confinement provides maximum supervision of the highest risk sexually abusive youth and intensive sex-specific clinical intervention. The Juvenile Court places custody of the juvenile with the Youth Parole Authority. The Youth Parole Authority (through DJJYS), the NOJOS certified sex-specific clinician(s) and the correctional facility's clinical team monitor the youth's compliance and progress in the treatment program.

Criteria for Discharge (See Treatment Process For Discharge Section above)

As stated earlier, length of stay is typically determined by the guideline set by the youth parole authority based on clinical recommendation and the youth's sex-specific assessment following court order into secure care. Because of their elevated risk level and rehabilitative needs, most Level Eight youth spend many months in a secure facility. The treatment team including the State case manager monitor treatment progress and determine when the youth is eligible and can safely be recommended for release. The Youth Parole Authority must approve release.

Depending on risk potential and the youth's needs for structured/supported transition supervision, and continued treatment and skills building to ensure their safe and successful return to the community, the youth may need a step-down residential placement and/or outpatient treatment to ensure successful and safe return to the community. Based on research, following release from a residential secure level of care, many youth need additional support to be able to apply treatment gains and maintain new self-regulation and executive functioning skills in the community. Therefore, aftercare and follow-up treatment and transition support is strongly recommended following incarceration in a Level Eight Secure Care facility.

As detailed in the NOJOS Assessment Protocol, an updated sex-specific assessment is also strongly recommended prior to any discharge or step-up or step-down in the NOJOS RNR Continuum.