



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## Protocol for Reassessment of Youth Level of Service (YLS)

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 11.6

### Why, When, What, and How

#### Why Reassess:

- Re-assessments are conducted to monitor change and progress.
- If there is a significant decrease in the youth's risk then lower supervision, structure, etc. may be considered.
- If there is no decrease in the youth's risk, then a different intervention or other changes to the case plan may be needed.

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory is administered initially when delinquent youth are committed to DCS for supervision/treatment, including diversion. The YLS assesses eight critical areas, providing information for the areas that need effective intervention in order to prevent recidivism. In addition, an overall risk level is given that indicates the current likelihood of recidivism without effective interventions. After the initial assessment is administered and interventions are made, subsequent re-assessments should be given to monitor change and progress. The reassessments allow for informed decisions in the adjustments of treatment and services as well as information regarding the intensity of supervision needed.

#### When to Reassess

Reassessments should occur within timeframes that allow adequate time for the youth and family to respond to interventions but also allow for timely adjustments in case planning as needed. Juvenile Justice (JJ) custody youth who are in a Youth Development Center, Level III Residential placement or Level IV Residential placement are not required to have reassessments. For other JJ youth, the following are guidelines as to when a YLS reassessment should occur:

- Re-assessment is completed every 6 months unless a youth has had a YLS reassessment prior to the six month period for clinical reasons.
  - ◆ If a youth has not had a YLS Reassessment for clinical reasons prior to then a reassessment is to be completed.
- The minimum time frame to initiate a Reassessment is 3 months unless there is a situation or circumstance that would warrant completing one prior to three months.
  - ◆ If this occurs, the TL reviews the circumstances to determine if there is a need for an early reassessment and the TL clearly documents the reasons in the Case Conference tab in TFACTS.
- A YLS Reassessment takes place if any of the following are applicable:
  - ◆ Consideration for change in placement level of care;

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- ◆ Consideration for change in supervision level; **or**
- ◆ Consideration for Discharge/Release:
  - For JJ custody youth in a Youth Development Center, Level III Residential placement or Level IV Residential placement, interventions and progress on areas of need as reflected by the initial or most recent YLS are evaluated and continued areas of need and related interventions are identified prior to release.
  - For youth on Probation or Aftercare and for youth residing in Tennessee being supervised under the Interstate Compact on Juveniles, reassessment takes place prior to making a recommendation for discharge to the court.
  - For youth on pre-trial diversion who the court has ordered to be supervised by DCS, if a youth scored LOW for overall risk on the initial YLS assessment and **no** change has occurred in the case circumstances during the supervision by DCS, a reassessment for discharge is not required; although a re-assessment can be completed, if desired.

### **What is a Reassessment?**

- A reassessment is an opportunity to assess the youth and his/her family's progress and any changes in risk.
- A reassessment is a foundation for updating the case plan to be consistent with the youth's current risk and needs.

A re-assessment is an opportunity to monitor progress and any changes in risk. It provides a foundation for updating the case plan to be consistent with the youth's current risk and needs. The following provides guidelines for how to complete a reassessment, including the adjustment of timeframes.

### **How is a Reassessment Completed?**

#### **Basics**

- a) Is completed by the youth's assigned Community FSW; must be YLS certified;
- b) New interview with the youth is conducted; not completed during CFTM;
- c) New interview with the parent/guardian is conducted if appropriate; not completed during CFTM;
  - ◆ This can be impacted by individual case and situation.
- d) Interview with other professionals and significant person(s) are conducted as appropriate;
  - ◆ Case Manager or Therapist at Placement if custody youth
  - ◆ Other key person(s) at placement
- e) Ensure that juvenile court records are up to date;
- f) Ensure that school records are up to date;
- g) Ensure that all relevant records from placement and any other sources are available and reviewed;

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- h) Document all relevant information in the YLS component of TFACTS; and
- i) Complete the TFACTS YLS process.

### **Adjustments/Reminders**

- a) The FSW has 21 calendar days to complete the YLS Re-Assessment and submit the results to the team after it is determined that a re-assessment is needed or the youth is approaching 6 months without a reassessment.
- b) Time frames are adjusted on several subscales when completing a reassessment. This allows for the instrument to capture changes the youth and his/her family have demonstrated and provides an updated assessment that is more reflective of the youth's current functioning and situation.
- c) Items that use a 12 month time frame on the initial YLS have a 3 month time frame on the reassessment in order to better reflect changes/progress by the youth and family.
- d) **Although not required, if desired a reassessment YLS can be done for a youth in a YDC Level III Residential placement or Level IV Residential placement. If a reassessment is done, guidance for completing each YLS subscale is provided below.**

### **Time Frame Adjustments**

#### **1. Prior/Current Offenses**

There is no adjustment in time frames for this subscale.

Updated legal records are reviewed to assure there have been no additional charges, probation violations and/or adjudications since the last YLS.

#### **2. Family Circumstances/Parenting**

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

**While youth in Youth Development Centers, Level III Residential and Level IV Residential placement are not required to have YLS re-assessments while in placement, a reassessment can be completed if desired. If a reassessment is completed on a youth in this type of residential placement, the following guidelines assist in gathering information and making scoring decisions.**

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, **Level III Residential, Level IV Residential**)**

- a) To reassess the family area for youth in facilities, an interview with the parent/guardian(s) is completed and if possible, there is a new home visit.

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- b) If there are other children in the home, an attempt is made to assess parenting practices with the other children.
- c) In addition, if there are passes, an ongoing assessment of family functioning is conducted **by the FSW** when the youth is on pass.
- d) **The FSW** also interviews facility staff regarding interactions and progress in family therapy.
- e) If there is visitation with the parent/guardian(s), then information about the interaction between family and youth during visitation would be beneficial (arguing, violation or compliance with visitation rules).
- f) Information about interactions during phone calls is also of benefit (sometimes youth may engage in disrespectful behavior during these calls, etc).
- g) For youth in YDCs, the CM is a good source of information. **The FSW** can request that the CM obtain information from the staff-supervising visitation.

### 3. Education/Employment

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

When completing a reassessment for a youth attending public school, updated school records are obtained. If a youth is in a facility with an in-house school educational **program**, records from the institution are obtained.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, **Level III Residential, Level IV Residential**)**

For youth in a facility for the 3 months preceding the reassessment, base the Educational section on the youth's academic achievement and school behavior in the **facility's** school. *It may not be possible to score the disruptive behavior on school property items, as this generally will not apply to a facility.*

### 4. Peer Relations

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, **Level III Residential, Level IV Residential**)**

- a) The peer section includes who the youth associates with in the facility.
- b) If the youth associates with peers who are being disruptive in the program and **is not** cooperating with the program, this would be considered negative peers.

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- c) If the youth avoids such people and associates with those cooperating with the program, the FSW can consider these positive peers.
- d) Also, assesses for gang involvement in the facility.
- e) Notes their involvement with negative or positive peers prior to placement as this may be relevant to the case plan.
- f) For youth in the YDC, it may be more difficult to distinguish between acquaintances and friends; use the criteria that friends are ones that the youth is closer to or may tend to hang out with more.
- g) For youth in a YDC, gather information from the CM, teachers, dorm staff, and coach (recreation person).
- h) Remember that it is possible that the youth may be writing/receiving letters from negative peers in the community although information may not be easily available.

### 5. Substance Abuse

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, Level III Residential, Level IV Residential)**

- a) The Drug section is scored based on the use the last three months.
- b) In most instances, the youth probably will not have an opportunity to use in the facility. However, there are times drugs are introduced in facilities or the youth uses drugs while on pass and this is assessed as well.
- c) Some youth may have random drug screens as part of their YDC Alcohol & Drug Program. In addition, remember to consider the misuse of prescription drugs; sometimes youth obtain prescription medication from other youth, or give false information to try to obtain specific prescribed drugs.

### 6. Leisure/Recreation

“Limited organized activities” and “no personal interests” continue to be scored based on what the youth is currently doing.

For “could make better use of time”, look at last 3 months.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, Level III Residential, Level IV Residential)**

- a) The Leisure/Recreation area is scored based on how the youth is using their time in the facility and their participation in recreational activities in the facility.
- b) If the youth does not have the opportunity to be involved in organized activities, this is documented and the item scored.

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- c) For youth in a YDC, there are several things that can be considered when looking at how the youth's uses his/her time. Check to see if the youth is going to recreation every – or most – days and if so, if he/she is using his/her time wisely instead of sitting on the bleachers "hanging out". You can also check to see how he is using his down time in the dorm – is he/she reading, playing cards, watching TV or what.
- d) Ask specifically about if the youth has personal interests that they are doing something with on a regular basis. If there isn't really the opportunity for the youth to engage in the personal interests, then you would still score it but document about the lack of opportunity to be involved.
- e) Check with the coach (recreational person) since they may have relevant information regarding interests.

### **7. Personality/Behavior**

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, Level III Residential, Level IV Residential)**

- a) Items in the Personality/Behavior section generally are scored based on the youth's behavior and attitude within the facility for the past three months.
- b) If the youth gets passes, behavior and attitude on passes is also considered. It is important that records of the facility are reviewed and interviews conducted with the facility/program case manager and/or therapist.
- c) For youth in a YDC, interviewing dorm staff, teachers, CM, and coach (recreation person) gives the reviewer more detailed information. While there may be some documentation in TFACTS from the YDC; this is not be the only source of information.

### **8. Attitudes/Orientation**

A 3-month time frame is used instead of a 12-month time frame. Documentation focuses on information about the specific items over the course of the 3 months preceding the YLS. Scoring is based on the last 3 months rather than 12 months.

#### **Youth in Facilities (YDC, Level III Residential, Level IV Residential)**

- ◆ For youth in a YDC, interviewing dorm staff, teachers, CM, and coach (recreation person) gives the reviewer more detailed information. While there may be some documentation in TFACTS from the YDC; this is not the only source of information.

**Reassessments and Case Planning:**

- a) For youth in facilities, the reassessment may indicate reduced risk in certain areas (e.g., Substance Abuse, Truancy, etc.) and the reduced risk may be due (at least partially) to the lack of opportunity for the youth to engage in certain behaviors. Documentation reflects this and the case plan also makes note of this.
- b) The case plan includes goals and interventions to support and maintain the decrease in risk and positive changes.
- c) The case plan also continues to focus on subscales that the youth is moderate or high on and includes goals and specific interventions to decrease risk.
- d) FSW can often provide the interventions to help reduce risk.