



SIERRA RIDGE ACADEMY

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 Sierra Ridge Academy showed high marks in *Responsiveness to customer needs, Professionalism, Availability of Case Managers, and Professionalism of Direct Care Staff.*

The areas from the Customer Survey for Sierra Ridge Academy that showed their were areas for improvement included *Frequency of Face to Face Visits, Parent Orientation & Training, and Family Counseling.*

Rite of Passage Sierra Ridge 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, Sierra Ridge Academy has used the information to add additional family therapists, and has conducted several parent orientation meetings in the communities from which students were placed.

In 2011 Rite of Passage Sierra Ridge 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.

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Marian Wright Edelman

75% of Spring Graduating Students Receive High School Diploma or GED

On February 9th, 2011 Sierra Ridge Academy held one of its largest graduation ceremonies in its 16 year history. The ceremony boasted five students completing their validation, eight students completing the Rite of Passage program, ten high school graduates, and three students completing their GED.

Rite of Passage's I-Validate program is a comprehensive plan individually designed for each student that assists them in achieving their goals prior to transitioning back to their communities. I-Validate is: Individualized, Vocation, Activities, Life Skills, Individual Strengths and Skills, Demonstrated Behavior Change, After-care, Therapy, and Education.

Each student must complete their individualized plan in order to receive recognition during the graduation ceremony.

The Student Speaker was Anthony F. who provided insight into his success and was ex-



Changed Lives: Young men who now have the opportunity to build new lives taking an education and college opportunities as they leave Sierra Ridge Academy

cited about beginning his next step in his journey as a college student. He has enrolled at Citrus Community College.

Sierra Ridge Academy wishes to recognize each student for their efforts and success in making choices that will change the course of their lives.

Community Praise for Teamwork

On January 29th, Rite of Passage Sierra Ridge Academy students competed in a wrestling match against Argonaut High School. They were excited to walk away with a victory!

Sherryl from Crescent City, CA was nice enough to forward a note that read "...Knowing how much it means to direct troubled youth in the right direction at such an impressionable age! All of your employees are Greatly Appreciated! ... Congratulations to a Great Coaching Staff!



Working as a team is its own reward for the Sierra Ridge Academy Wrestling Team

Sierra Ridge Academy Dining Hall Remodel Open House

Rite of Passage Athletic Training Center's and Schools, Inc. is completing its Dining Hall remodel and will be hosting an Open House and Dedication April 8, 2011. Guests are cordially invited to attend the dedication and lunch afterwards with staff and students.

The dedication is from 11 am to 11:30 am with lunch to follow.



Please RSVP to Alicia Bristol at: abristol@rop.com or 209-736-4500

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 on-going 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

Rite of Passage Implementation & Continuous Quality Improvement



Working as a Team to continually improve the process

evidence-based practices, training for key staff to assure fidelity of the practices being implemented, and 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

- Lowenkamp, C. T. (2004). Correctional Program Integrity and Treatment Effectiveness: A Multi-site Program-level Analysis. The University of Cincinnati: Doctoral Dissertation.
- Latessa, E.J., & Lowenkamp, C.T. (2006). What Works in Reducing Recidivism? University of St. Thomas Law Journal. 3 (3), pp. 521-535.
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