Evaluation of the Youthful Offender System (YOS) in Colorado:

A report of Findings per 18-1.3-407, C.R.S.

November 1, 2012

Prepared by

Germaine Miera
Diane Pasini-Hill
Peg Flick
Linda Harrison
Christine Adams
Laurence Lucero
Kim English

Colorado Department of Public Safety
Division of Criminal Justice
Office of Research and Statistics

Division of Criminal Justice
700 Kipling, Denver, Colorado 80215
http://dcj.state.co.us/ors/

Evaluation of the Youthful Offender System (YOS) in Colorado:

A report of Findings per 18-1.3-407, C.R.S.

November 1, 2012

Prepared by

Germaine Miera
Diane Pasini-Hill
Peg Flick
Linda Harrison
Christine Adams
Laurence Lucero
Kim English

Colorado Department of Public Safety
Division of Criminal Justice
Office of Research and Statistics

Division of Criminal Justice
700 Kipling, Denver Colorado 80215
http://dcj.state.co.us/ors/

James Davis, Executive Director, Department of Public Safety
Jeanne M. Smith, Director, Division of Criminal Justice
Kim English, Research Director, Office of Research and Statistics

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of officials at the Colorado Department of Corrections. We thank Tom Clements, Executive Director of DOC; Tim Hand, Director of Parole, Community Corrections, and the Youthful Offender System; and Steven Hager, Warden of YOS for their enthusiastic support of this study. We would also like to thank the YOS management team, including Associate Warden Mike Romero, Administrative Services Manager Shirley Steinbeck, Operations Manager Kevin Furton, and School Principal Jeffrey Comfort for their assistance throughout the course of the study.

We also thank Katherine Hochevar for her valuable assistance in providing DOC data to DCJ researchers, and answering the many questions we asked about the YOS data.

We are particularly grateful to Shirley Steinbeck and Mike Romero who arranged the interviews, focus groups, survey groups, and access to YOS documentation about the program. Shirley Steinbeck patiently answered dozens of questions and assisted the research team in enumerable ways.

Finally, we are grateful to the staff and residents of YOS who participated in the study. To take part in the study, many staff came to work on their day off or before/after their shift. The residents who participated were polite and engaging. We very much appreciate the level of interest and cooperation we received while we were collecting data for this study of YOS.

Despite this assistance and cooperation, any errors or omissions are ours alone.

YOS Evaluation Team
October 2012

Table of Contents

01 Executive Summary
01 Research Findings and Questions
06 Additional Findings

11 Section 1: Introduction
11 Third Evaluation in a Series
11 Important Changes Since the Last Report
12 Organization of This Report
12 Background and Description of YOS

17 Section 2: Research Questions and Study Design
17 Research Questions
18 Institutional Review Board Approval
18 Data Collection
18 Quantitative Data
19 Qualitative Data
20 Offender Sample Description
21 Analysis
21 Limitations of This Study

23 Section 3: Findings
49 Additional Findings

71 Section 4: Recommendations

73 Appendix A: Interview Guides and Questionnaires
75 Interview/Focus Group Guide: Staff
77 Interview Guide: Administration/Education/Medical
79 Focus Group Guide: Residents
81 Focus Group Guide: Younger Residents
83 Questionnaire: Resident
87 Questionnaire: YOS Staff

Figures

30	Figure 3.1	YOS status levels, privileges, and expectations
40	Figure 3.2	Race and ethnicity of YOS population at intake, 1994-2012
41	Figure 3.3	Gang membership by ethnicity, FY 1994 - FY 2012 admissions (n=1414)
44	Figure 3.4	Felony class of most serious conviction crime for YOS intakes, 1994-2012
48	Figure 3.5	YOS Termination Types, 1995-2012 (N=1150)
50	Figure 3.6	Do you think there is a consistent philosophy between facility administrators and line staff (staff survey)? (n=125)
52	Figure 3.7	YOS staff perceptions of morale (staff survey) (n=126)
56	Figure 3.8	Proportion of YOS offenders with a COPD violation, 1994-2012
57	Figure 3.9	Top Five COPD violations, 1994-2012 (n=2735 violations)
57	Figure 3.10	Proportion of the YOS population serving time for a violent crime
58	Figure 3.11	Do you feel safe at YOS (offender survey)?
67	Figure 3.12	Mental health needs of incoming YOS offenders, 1994-2012
68	Figure 3.13	Gender of incoming population (count), 1994-2012 (n=1414)

Tables

21	Table 2.1	Race/ethnicity and gender of YOS offender survey respondents compared to YOS total population at time of survey
21	Table 2.2	Phase of YOS offender respondents at time of survey (n=99)
38	Table 3.1	YOS age at entry, 1994-2012
39	Table 3.2	Age at intake, 1994-2012
40	Table 3.3	Gang membership of YOS intakes, 1994-2012
42	Table 3.4	The proportion (%) of the YOS population with high needs on the CYO-LSI, 2005-2012
43	Table 3.5	Most serious conviction charge over time, 1994-2012
45	Table 3.6	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Index crime is violent or sex offense
45	Table 3.7	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Index crime is violent or sex offense
46	Table 3.8	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Prior convictions for violent or sex offense
46	Table 3.9	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Prior convictions for violent or sex offense
47	Table 3.10	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Proportion with prior conviction histories
47	Table 3.11	Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Proportion with prior conviction histories
48	Table 3.12	2-Year Post-Release Recidivism (n=733)
61	Table 3.13	Academic needs of YOS intakes, 2008-2012

Executive Summary

In 2012, The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice undertook an evaluation of the Department of Corrections' Youthful Offender System (YOS). This study presents recidivism rates and a broad picture of the operations of YOS as observed from the perspective of the residents, staff, and managers. Researchers administered two surveys, one to staff (with 73% response rate) and one to residents (with a 49% response rate), along with 20 focus groups of residents and staff and 10 interviews with YOS staff and officials. From these numerous data collection efforts, multiple themes emerged to answer the research questions that guided the study. The research questions and the findings are summarized below.

This study presents recidivism rates and a broad picture of the operations of YOS as observed from the perspective of the residents, staff, and managers.

Research Questions and Findings

1. Per Colorado Revised Statute 18-1.3-407(10)(b), is the current operation of YOS consistent with statute?

a. Does the system provide for teaching offenders self-discipline by providing clear consequences for inappropriate behavior?

Yes, YOS operations appear to be generally consistent with statute. In answer to this question, consequences for negative behaviors range from revocation to the Department of Corrections traditional prison system, to regression to lower behavioral status levels,[1] to negative chronological reports. For serious types of misconduct, disciplinary measures also include regression to the Intake, Diagnostic and Orientation Unit (IDO) for offenders receiving punitive segregation, remediation, removal from population, and special management.

[1] YOS has implemented a behavioral "level" system where those with higher status have greater privileges (see Figure 3.1). This system is described in detail later in the report.

Among the most reliable findings, however, in reports from both staff and residents, was inconsistency in the delivery of both positive sanctions and negative sanctions. This inconsistency was a source of frustration for both staff and offenders. It should be noted, however, that many YOS staff discussed their commitment to individualizing the YOS experience. Some staff reported trying to maximize the learning experience by ensuring that the consequences linked to the behavior. The warden promotes the use of immediate and meaningful sanctions for both pro-social behavior and misconduct.

b. Does the system include a daily regimen of physical training, self discipline exercises, education and work programs, and meaningful interaction? Does the system include a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance?

Does the system include a daily regimen of physical training, self discipline exercises, education and work programs, and meaningful interaction? Yes, YOS includes a focus on physical training and self discipline, along with education, work programs and meaningful interaction. The Intake, Diagnostic and Orientation (IDO) unit is a high security unit where all new arrivals to YOS are preliminarily assigned. Offenders spend four weeks in IDO.

Regarding education and work programs, as required in statute, YOS offers both GED training and a high school diploma. In surveys, focus groups, and staff interviews, both residents and staff consistently stated that the education (including vocational) component of YOS was its most valuable feature. In fact, 87% of YOS survey respondents reported that they would choose YOS again if given the opportunity, and nearly every respondent cited the reason for choosing YOS again was the reduction in time (compared to their prison sentence) and the educational opportunities. Nevertheless, data gathered for the evaluation suggest a need for more post-secondary classes for those in Phase I (see page 14 for description), the longest component of YOS. Small classroom sizes mean that not everyone can participate in available college courses.

In surveys, focus groups, and staff interviews, both residents and staff consistently stated that the education (including vocational) component of YOS was its most valuable feature.

The YOS's positive peer culture and the status levels require that residents become proficient in the following cognitive-behavioral learning strategies: Guided Group Interaction (GGI),[2] Quick Skills (cognitive skill-building techniques), and anger management techniques. Proficiency in these techniques is required for upward movement in the level system. In addition, residents are expected to confront the negative behavior of their peers, using skills they acquire.

Does the system include a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance? Yes, a core component of YOS is the nine-level behavioral management system which links behavioral expectations to privileges. See Figure 3.1 for a partial

[2] GGI uses group dynamics and peer pressure to promote pro-social behaviors (YOS *Annual Report*, FY11, page 6). Offenders are assigned to a specific GGI group.

description of the expectations and privileges associated with the behavioral management system. To progress in the level system, residents are required to behave according to YOS norms and expectations. These norms and expectations are posted in the housing units and articulated in the YOS *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual*.

To progress in the level system, individuals are required to behave according to YOS norms and expectations.

c. Does the system use staff role models and mentors to promote pro-social behavior?

Yes, YOS uses staff role models and mentors to promote pro-social behavior. Staff are required by state statute and administrative rules and officials' expectations to act as role models and mentors to YOS offenders. All but one staff survey respondent answered affirmatively to the question: "Do you consider yourself a role model?"[3] In focus groups and surveys, many staff discussed their responsibilities regarding role modeling and mentoring, and many felt proud about being able and expected to accomplish this. Indeed, this concept seemed to be part of the YOS staff culture. However, not all staff met these expectations, according to some of the offenders participating in the study. Many resident focus group participants reported that while some of the staff treat them respectfully, still others treat them poorly and do not provide mentoring or role modeling.

Staff are required by state statute and administrative rules and officials' expectations to act as role models and mentors to YOS offenders.

d. Does the system provide offenders with instruction on problem-solving skills and the use of cognitive behavior strategies?

Yes, YOS offers several types of problem-solving instruction and cognitive behavioral approaches, including GGI, Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens,[4] sex offender treatment,[5] anger management classes, victim empathy class,[6] substance abuse classes, Quick Skills, Baby-Think-It-Over,[7] self help groups and group therapy.[8] Evaluating the delivery, content, and fidelity of specific program elements, such as these, is beyond the scope of this evaluation. While survey data revealed that some offenders, especially younger offenders,

---

[3] The respondent who did not answer "Yes" answered the question with "Sometimes." None of the respondents answered "No" to the question.

[4] This is a relatively new addition to the YOS cognitive-behavioral curriculum, with 21 offenders completing the class by April 2012.

[5] The sex offender therapist position was not filled during the period of the evaluation. In the prior 5 years, approximately 26 YOS offenders participated in sex offender treatment, according to a memorandum to the YOS warden from C. Olin, the sex offender treatment program coordinator, dated March 29, 2012.

[6] The curriculum for "Victim Impact: Listen and Learn" was developed by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.

[7] This Phase II program involves providing the offenders with computer-simulated infant dolls that cry when they need something (to be fed, changed, etc.). The women keep these dolls for a period of 4 weeks; the men keep them for one week.

[8] In addition, preparation for the 26-module *Thinking for a Change*, developed by the National Institute of Corrections, was being implemented as the evaluation was underway. *Inside Out Dad* is a parenting class taught by volunteers and available to all offenders. Between February 2008 and May 2011, 130 offenders completed the program. Efforts are underway to begin teaching this class again.

valued these programs, GGI and Quick Skills require small groups and the physical plant, with 54 person pods, makes it difficult to convene a meaningful small group. In particular, it is difficult for a small group to have the privacy necessary to deal with problems typically addressed by GGI and Quick Skills.[9] It is noteworthy that many of the women, in particular, valued "huddle ups" which is a 10-minute cognitive behavioral technique for gathering feedback on a problem, but there are only nine women. Staff reported that the huddle ups work best with small groups, and that it is difficult to conduct meaningful huddle ups with the large numbers of men in the pods.

e. Does the system promote pro-social behavior?

Yes. A primary method of promoting pro-social behavior is the use of a behavioral management/level system to gain privileges, as discussed previously (see Figure 3.1). Privileges are earned under a merit system, and these increase with the offender's status levels but can be lost due to problematic behavior or rule infractions. Behavioral expectations are articulated in the *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual* (2012). Privileges include visitation, telephone calls, television, radios, and canteen items.[10] Inconsistency in rule enforcement, and inconsistency in general practice, was a concern very frequently mentioned by both staff and offenders on surveys and in focus groups. These inconsistencies can have important consequences for the residents' status/privileges, making loss of privileges or lack of progress dependent on staff behavior as much as inmate behavior.

f. Does the system provide offenders the opportunity to gradually reenter the community?

An important component of Phase ll is the acquisition of birth certificates, social security cards, and Colorado identification cards that are necessary for job applications and housing.

Yes, Phase ll and Phase lll (see page 14 for a description) are designed to gradually reintegrate the offender into the community. The Phase ll component of YOS is referred to as pre-release,[11] and occurs during the last three months of an offender's incarceration at the Pueblo facility. Phase ll includes supervised scheduled appointments and activities in the community. Phase ll focuses on building on the academic skills acquired in Phase l, and includes offender participation in career planning and job seeking skills. Offenders must attend classes in nutrition and food preparation, budgeting and personal safety.[12] An important component of Phase ll is the acquisition of birth certificates, social security cards, and Colorado identification cards that are necessary for job applications and housing.

---

[9] Only 16% of resident survey respondents stated that GGI was helpful; Blacks were more likely than other race/ethnic groups to mention the value of GGI.

[10] Y*outhful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis. Colorado Springs, CO. Page 7.

[11] See DOC's *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, FY11*, page 21.

[12] Ibid, page 22.

Community transition team meetings include YOS staff from Phase I, II, and III, clinical staff, the offender's educational advisor, family members and relevant community service providers. These meetings occur during Phase II to develop an individualized supervision and reentry plan for Phase III. Phase III is six to 12 months of intensive supervision in the community. According to DOC documentation, actual time in Phase III is based on (1) the duration of the offender's sentence to YOS, and (2) demonstrated and documented positive behavior and program participation. Those with positive behavior are released earlier and have longer periods of Phase III.

2. What are the current and overall (since 1994) characteristics of the YOS population? Have these changed over time?

The demographic characteristics of the YOS population have remained fairly stable since 1995, when the first group of offenders was admitted. In large part, changes to the YOS population over time are a reflection of statutory modifications that affected the eligibility requirements. The average age at intake has increased somewhat in recent years from 16.6 to 18.5, which was to be expected due to changes in 2010 statute that removed most juveniles ages 14 and 15 from direct file consideration[13] and the 2009 statutory modification that extended the age of sentencing to include 19 and 20 year olds.[14]

The most serious criminal convictions for YOS offenders are aggravated robbery, robbery, aggravated assault, and assault. These have been the most common offenses over the years.

The largest proportion of the YOS population has been and continues to be Hispanic, followed by Caucasians and African Americans.

Gang membership among YOS intakes has varied somewhat over the years. The proportion of the incoming population with strong gang affiliations has ranged from a low of about seven percent (FY 1999) to a high of about 27% (2008) and 28% in 1995.

Finally, according to DOC data, the most common serious criminal convictions for YOS offenders include aggravated robbery, robbery, aggravated assault, and assault. In terms of felony class, Felony 3s and Felony 4s are the most common. The use of YOS for offenders convicted of Felony 5s as the most serious crime has declined significantly since 2004.

3. Are YOS offenders more serious than juveniles sentenced to the Division of Youth Corrections (in the juvenile justice system) and less serious than those sentenced to prison? (That is, is the YOS population unique?)

Yes, YOS appears to be a unique population. YOS admissions between 2005 and 2011, compared to those sentenced to DOC and the Division of Youth Corrections, were more

---

[13] C.R.S. §19-2-517. Direct file refers to juveniles prosecuted in adult court.

[14] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407. This legislation contains a repeal date of October 1, 2012.

likely to have a violent/sex index offense, were nearly equally likely as DOC to have a prior violent/sex conviction history, and somewhat less likely than DOC admissions, and more likely than DYC commitments, to have a prior felony conviction history.

4. What is the program completion rate of YOS participants? What is the new filing rate of individuals released from YOS since 1994?

Since 1998, the YOS completion rate has been approximately 70% to 80%. This is a high completion rate considering the serious nature of the YOS population.

Since 1998, the YOS completion rate has been approximately 70% to 80%. This is a high completion rate considering the serious nature of the YOS population.

Of 733 individuals released from the Youthful Offender System between 1996 and June 2010 with at least two years of time at risk in the community, 25.4% received a new felony conviction within two years. Less than half of the new felony convictions were for a violent crime. Just over one-third of the releases (34.9%) eventually returned to DOC for a new felony after as long as 16 years, and the majority of new crimes committed by this population that warranted a prison sentence occurred within the first five years of release. This finding is encouraging given the very serious risk level of those sentenced to YOS.

Additional Findings

Strong Staff and Administration

Most staff expressed extremely positive perceptions about the YOS leadership team. In particular, the facility warden, Steve Hager, is credited with giving a clear vision of his expectations of YOS staff. Further, the YOS administration was viewed almost unanimously by staff study participants as being open to new ideas and supportive of staff efforts. Prior to Mr. Hager becoming warden in 2005, YOS had three different wardens over a five year period, leading to difficulty in the expression and implementation of a clear direction and set of values. Today, the YOS written guiding principles are steeped in the language of the enabling statute.[15] The YOS management team, including the warden, provides direct training to staff about the YOS philosophy and expectations of staff, a fact that was noted during several staff focus groups. The strong administration and consistent message of the YOS vision may be linked to the perception of positive morale among YOS staff respondents.

The YOS administration was viewed almost unanimously by staff study participants as being open to new ideas and supportive of staff efforts.

[15] *Youthful Offender System Employee Handbook, 2011-2012; YOS Drill Instructor Manual* (March 2012); DOC Administrative Regulation 1600-01; YOS Offender Reception and Orientation Manual (January 2012).

Lack of Physical Space and Activities

The need for additional space was among the most consistent findings of the study. The lack of adequate space interferes with programming. Many of the cognitive behavioral strategies involve working together in small groups to solve personal problems, but there is virtually no room for individual or small group interaction.

The lack of activities appeared to be a chronic problem despite significant efforts by the recreation staff to develop them.

The lack of activities also appeared to be a chronic problem despite significant efforts by the recreation staff to develop them. A consistent theme from staff was the need for a gym, which the facility does not have, to keep the offenders busy and to burn off energy.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) owns an empty building on the YOS grounds called Building 20. Early plans for the current YOS facility included the acquisition of Building 20 when it became available, however it would require approximately $1M to retrofit the building for YOS use. Acquiring the building would offer significant advantages: It would allow for IDO to be moved from the LaVista facility to the YOS grounds, better aligning IDO with the YOS mission and goals; Building 20 has a small gym that would be extremely valuable to YOS; and there is a food preparation area that could be used for IDO, the YOS women and Phase ll offenders (who are all housed separately from the main Phase l population).[16]

Safety

One question in the resident survey asked "Do you feel safe at YOS?" Eighty percent (80%) of the survey respondents reported that they felt safe or somewhat safe at YOS.[17] Most staff, including those who have worked in other prison settings, believed the YOS environment was safe, especially considering that YOS houses a dangerous population (over 80% of admissions are for violent crimes). Concerns were voiced, in surveys, focus groups and interviews, about areas that had little or no line-of-sight supervision. Cameras were installed in these areas while the study was underway. Importantly, there was no indication in any of the study data of assaultive behavior by staff. Rather, some staff and offenders voiced concern about the assaultive nature of some residents.

Most staff, including those who have worked in other prison settings, believed the YOS environment was safe, especially considering that YOS houses a dangerous population (over 80% of admissions are for violent crimes).

---

[16] Currently food for all meals is prepared at the nearby LaVista Correctional Facility and transported to the YOS facility three times each day.

[17] This compares to 69% who said they felt safe or somewhat safe in the 2004 YOS evaluation report.

Inconsistency

As mentioned previously, inconsistency across staff was among the most frequently mentioned problems at YOS (along with lack of physical space) and so will be summarized briefly again here. In particular, both staff and residents mentioned the inconsistency in the delivery of both positive and negative sanctions. This inconsistency can directly and immediately affect a resident's status level and corresponding privileges. Further, the perceived inconsistency is critically important to the offenders since it results in the system feeling arbitrary.

YOS staff are encouraged by the administration to develop individualized consequences for problematic behavior, and the use of this discretion may be perceived by both staff and offenders as inconsistency across staff members.

Sometimes the inconsistency is linked to the delivery of consequences for negative behavior. However, YOS staff are encouraged by the administration to develop individualized consequences for problematic behavior, and the use of this discretion may be perceived by both staff and offenders as inconsistency across staff members. Conversations with YOS administrators during the course of the evaluation included concerns about inconsistency across staff members. Officials stated they would discuss this issue in management meetings and with supervisors.

Philosophical Tension

In both prior DCJ evaluations of YOS (studies published in 2002 and 2004), researchers found that both staff and residents viewed an overriding tension between what researchers called the "prison versus program" philosophical conflict. This tension did not surface as a problem in the current evaluation. On the contrary, staff consistently reported that the mission was clear: to promote the success of residents who would return to the community much sooner than if they had served their original prison sentence. Researchers observed during time on-site that the focus on security was paramount but it was done in conjunction with a philosophy that prioritized programming.

The focus on security was paramount but it was done in conjunction with a philosophy that prioritized programming.

Progress Assessment Summary

The Progress Assessment Summary (PAS) is an individualized plan that specifies the needs of the offender. It is prepared during the first 30 days while the offender is in IDO and is reviewed every six months by the offender and his or her progress team. In DCJ's 2004 study of YOS, both staff and residents reported that the residents had no input into their goals and that the PAS is not regularly reviewed with the offender. This does not appear to be the case currently. Over 80% of inmate survey respondents were aware of their PAS and about 65% reported that they knew what their PAS goals were.

Health Issues

Several health issues surfaced during the course of the evaluation. These are summarized below.

Sleep. The single most frequently mentioned concern by residents was lack of sleep. Sleep issues were divided into two themes, last and first count and sleeping in. Residents are awakened at 4:45 a.m., and the last standing count is at 9 p.m. Nightly body checks[18] are done between last count and 10 p.m. Many residents stated that they did not fall asleep immediately, leaving them with less than seven hours of sleep. This situation was aggravated by an inability to sleep in on the weekends (when activities were at a minimum) or during the offender's free time.[19] The Centers for Disease Control and the National Sleep Foundation report that adolescents need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep and adults need 7 to 9 hours.[20] Failure to achieve the proper amount of sleep can compromise mood, performance and alertness[21] and could contribute to behavior problems in the facility.

Sleeping in and TV access are both weekend privileges that must be earned. For example, in a memorandum to the warden from one of the YOS supervisors that described a June 2012 weekend, two pods of Phase I offenders were allowed sleeping and TV privileges but one pod "had significant negative issues during the week" and was not allowed to participate.[22]

Medical. Data from resident focus groups reflected concerns about medical policies and practices. There is a cost associated with medical services: $3 for an office visit, $5 for an emergency.[23] Since jobs in prison pay less than $1 per day, offenders reported that this cost deters them from seeking medical treatment. Offenders reported that the choice for them is between medical services and phone calls with family and canteen items. The quality of services was also called into question by the focus group participants. Depending on the medical staff available, the treatment seemed to vary considerably.

Dental. Problems with delays in receiving dental services were mentioned in four resident focus groups. Focus group participants reported submitting written requests for services (beyond routine cleanings) and waiting months for a response.

Food. About 15% of offenders in both IDO and Phase I complained about the amount of food, according to survey data. This concern was raised in approximately half of the resident focus groups. Offenders complained that the portions were getting smaller and they were not getting enough to eat. On the other hand, about 5% of survey respondents said that one of the best things about YOS was the food.

---

[18] Body checks are performed by housing and security staff to identify injuries from possible fighting.

[19] For security reasons, most offenders are not allowed in their rooms during the day; they are required to be in a common area. Residents who have reached Phoenix status can be in their rooms during their free time.

[20] See http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Sleep/ and http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need.

[21] Bonnet, M. H. and Arand, D. L. (1995). We are chronically sleep deprived. *Sleep*. Vol. 18, No. 10. Pp. 908-911. Published by the American Sleep Disorders Association and Sleep Research Society.

[22] Memo from Casey Warner to Steve Hager dated 6/13/2012, provided to researchers by the warden.

[23] Medical services are not withheld in the event that an offender does not have the money for an office visit. However, it is documented in his record until he or she can pay the debt.

Staff Training

Staff training appears to be a strong point of YOS. Current annual training includes 32 hours of YOS-specific training. Data from focus groups and staff surveys indicate that the warden's and assistant warden's participation in the annual training was much appreciated and was central to communicating a consistent message about the YOS philosophy and the administration's expectations of staff.

Staff training appears to be a strong point of YOS.

Mental Health Services

In prior evaluations, DCJ found a lack of mental health services at YOS. This does not appear to be the case currently. According to interview data, a psychiatrist with a specialty in adolescents visits YOS approximately every six weeks to assess new admissions, monitor medication and oversee mental health care. Those few offenders with serious mental health needs are monitored at least monthly. Those with serious acute problems are seen by the psychologist at least weekly.

Programming for Females

A common criticism of YOS reported during the evaluation is the differential programming available to the women offenders. Women constitute about 4% of the current YOS population. Nine women lived at the YOS facility at the time of the study, with one woman transitioning to the community toward the end.

The separation of men and women is a fundamental safety decision, but due to the low number of females, this separation leads to inequities, and makes some female-only programming cost inefficient. Staff and women residents voiced concern about the inequities. While GED and high school programming is similar for men and women, participation in electives and vocational/technical training is not readily available for female residents. Additionally, because of the low number of female residents and the need for basic cost efficiencies, the women vote on their programming, with the highest number of votes getting selected, regardless of individual desires. Men are able to make their own individual choices on which classes they would like to take.

A common criticism of YOS reported during the evaluation is the differential programming available to the women offenders. Women constitute about 4% of the current YOS population.

The few numbers of women sentenced to YOS will always pose a significant challenge regarding their programming. Discussions with YOS officials during this study confirmed a longstanding awareness of this issue, and an openness to considering ways to expand programming, including increasing the time the women can engage in cosmetology programming.

Section 1:

Introduction

Third Evaluation in a Series

This report represents the third evaluation of the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) Youthful Offender System (YOS) conducted by the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ). The Division is mandated to evaluate the program biannually and submit the findings to the General Assembly on November 1st of even numbered years. However, this mandate is not funded by the General Assembly, and evaluations are completed as resources become available.

The first report was delivered on November 1, 2002. This report focused on recidivism rates, funding levels, comparisons of legislative intent to actual implementation, and characteristics of the YOS population. The second report, delivered on November 1, 2004, focused on these topics and also attempted to provide information on the perspectives of residents, staff, and administrators involved in the program.

The current report, dated November 1, 2012, reflects data collected during the spring and summer of 2012. DOC currently produces an annual report of YOS that includes funding levels and characteristics of the YOS population, and this evaluation does not replicate the information in that report. Rather, the evaluation compares legislative and DOC intent to actual implementation, presents the perceptions of residents and staff on a variety of topics, compares the arrest and conviction histories of youth committed to YOS with those placed in other sentencing options (probation, Division of Youth Corrections, and prison), and analyzes program failure and recidivism rates (rearrest/refiling for new felonies).

The current report, dated November 1, 2012, reflects data collected during the spring and summer of 2012.

Important Changes Since the Last Report

In 2006, the YOS moved from a larger facility that was not filled to capacity to a smaller one with a capacity of 256 and an average daily population of approximately 225. The warden position turned over many times in the past but since 2006 has been filled by Steve Hager.

Eligibility for the YOS program was modified, effective October 1, 2009, to include individuals who are 18 and 19 years old at the time of the offense but less than age 21 at the time of sentencing. This eligibility provision was repealed on October 1, 2012 (C.R.S. 18-1.3-407.5).[24] In 2010, statute modifications precluded juveniles 14 and 15 years of age from direct file consideration with the exception of 1st degree murder, any felony sex offense, and habitual juvenile offenders. With these changes, the average age of the YOS population has increased to 18, as indicated in Table 3.1.

Organization of This Report

Section One provides a brief overview of YOS and the enabling statute. Section Two specifies the research questions and describes the research methods employed for this study. Section Three presents the findings to the research questions including additional findings, and recommendations for change are included in Section Four.

Background and Description of YOS

The Youthful Offender System (YOS) was established nearly two decades ago by a special session of the Colorado General Assembly. The special session was called specifically to address youth violence, following a series of high profile crimes committed by juveniles. YOS opened in 1994 on the grounds of the Department of Corrections' Reception and Diagnostic Center in Denver, and became a sentencing option for juveniles who were convicted as adults and sentenced on or after June 3, 1994 for offenses committed on or after September 13, 1993. In 1998, YOS moved to Pueblo, and in 2006 it moved to its current location on the grounds of the Colorado Mental Health Institute.

YOS is an alternative to traditional adult prison, and it exists as a separate entity inside the Department of Corrections, with a separate facility and a specially designed system of programming. The statute describing YOS specifies that the state must provide a sentencing option for "certain youthful offenders" who would serve up to seven years day-for-day (meaning no good/earned time would apply) while a lengthier sentence to DOC would be suspended for the duration of the YOS sentence. According to statute, YOS offenders are to serve time in a "controlled and regimented environment that affirms dignity of self and others, promotes the value of work and self-discipline, and develops useful skills and abilities through enriched programming."[25] The statute directs DOC to develop a program that provides "separate housing for female and male offenders who are sentenced to [YOS] without compromising the equitable treatment of either."[26] The statute

The Youthful Offender System (YOS) was established nearly two decades ago by a special session of the Colorado General Assembly.

[24] DOC administrators are working with YOS stakeholders, including the Attorney General's Office, the State Public Defender's Office, and prosecutors' offices, to permanently expand the eligibility criteria to include 18 and 19 year olds.

[25] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407(1)(a)

[26] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407(1)(b)

mandates that program participants be housed separate "from and not brought into daily physical contact with adult offenders" and that these offenders be "subject to all laws and DOC rules, regulations, and standards pertaining to adult offenders...."[27]

YOS is an alternative to traditional adult prison, and it exists as a separate entity inside the Department of Corrections, with a separate facility and a specially designed system of programming.

The original target population for YOS was youth between the ages of 14 and 18 at the time of the offense who were direct filed or transferred to adult court and convicted as adults.[28] In 2009, the General Assembly expanded the eligibility criteria for sentencing to YOS (H.B. 09-1122) to include those who were 18 and 19 at the time of the offense (limited to felony class 3-6 violent crimes) and who were sentenced prior to their 21st birthday.[29] Determinant YOS sentences range from two to six years except that someone convicted of a class 2 felony may be sentenced for seven years.

The statute describes a three-phase program based on "self-discipline, a daily regime of exercise, education and work programs, and meaningful interaction, with a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance...."[30] YOS staff are to be mentors and role models to promote socially acceptable attitudes and behaviors, and programming is to include problem-solving skills and cognitive behavioral strategies that have the potential to change criminal thinking and behavior.[31]

According to statute, the YOS program is intended to promote among offenders a pro-social culture and provide an opportunity for offenders to gradually reenter the community. In addition, the enabling statute specifies that DOC officials will staff the YOS with individuals "who are trained in the treatment of youthful offenders...trained to act as role models and mentors...."[32] To this end, the statute requires the following specific program components (descriptions of phases were obtained from YOS documents):

- **Intake, Diagnostic, and Orientation (IDO) program**. This is a high security unit where all new arrivals to YOS are assigned. This unit is also used for placement of YOS offenders assigned to punitive segregation, remediation,[33] removal from population, and special management. This unit includes the Orientation Training Phase of YOS, which is a no-privilege, strict, highly structured, and physically demanding 28-day phase of YOS.[34]

---

[27] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407(1)(d)

[28] C.R.S. §19-2-517 (direct file), §19-2-518 (court transfer)

[29] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407.5

[30] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407(3)(b)

[31] C.R.S. §18-1.3-407(3)(d)

[32] C.R.S. § 18-1.3-407(3.5)

[33] Remediation is a temporary classification for YOS offenders who have behaved inappropriately, and is available as a sanction from Phase 1 until discharge of sentence. Remediation may include a return to IDO, treatment intervention, restricted activities, house arrest, and up to 28 days of detention. It may be achieved by the Code of Penal Discipline process or as a YOS sanction (see DOC Administrative Regulation 250-11).

[34] This description is from DOC's Administrative Regulation 250-11.

- **Phase I**. This is the longest YOS phase, lasting from approximately eight to 75 months during which time a range of intense core programs, supplementary activities, and educational and prevocational programs and services are provided to offenders. Living units are staffed with multidisciplinary teams and security, discipline, education, treatment, and behavior modification are the shared responsibility of each staff member.[35] Offender job assignments exist in food service, maintenance, janitorial service, teacher aide, library aide, recreation and laundry. Offenders attend education courses in conjunction with having a work assignment. At any point in time, the majority of YOS offenders are in Phase I.

- **Phase II**. This component occurs during the last three months of institutional confinement; offenders remain under 24-hour supervision while on scheduled appointments and community service activities[36] in the community.[37] All offenders participate in a monthly employment seminar which focuses on career planning, labor market information, interviewing skills, and job seeking skills. Phase II staff assist offenders in obtaining birth certificates, social security cards, and identification cards that will be necessary when offenders transition to the community.[38, 39]

- **Phase III**. This final component of a YOS sentence consists of a period of six to 12 months of community supervision where the offender is monitored during reintegration into society. An offender's eligibility for movement from Phase II to Phase III is based on (1) the duration of the offender's sentence to YOS, and (2) demonstrated and documented positive behavior and program participation.[40] Programming in Phase III includes education, employment, community service, drug and alcohol interventions, mental health treatment, restitution, and other activities as specified in the offender's transition plan. According to DOC's Administrative Regulation 250-06, caseloads of YOS Community Supervision Officers should not exceed 1:10, and supervision level is designed to focus resources on offenders who are at greater risk.

The statute specifies that the YOS include the following program elements:

a. Provide for teaching offenders self-discipline by providing clear consequences for inappropriate behavior;

---

[35] This description is from *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis. Page 20.

[36] All offenders sentenced to YOS are required to complete 100 hours of community service.

[37] *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis. Page 21-23.

[38] Ibid.

[39] In 2010, to ensure continuity and clear direction, Phase III was placed under the control of the YOS warden. Prior to this organizational change, Phase III was under the direction of DOC's community corrections unit.

[40] Note that those offenders with ICE detainers are ineligible for Phase III.

b. Include a daily regimen of physical training, self-discipline exercises, educational and work programs, and meaningful interaction, with a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance;

c. Use staff models and mentors to promote the development of socially accepted attitudes and behaviors;

d. Provide instruction on problem-solving skills including methods to reinforce the use of cognitive behavior strategies that change offenders' orientation toward criminal thinking and behavior;

The YOS statute mandates that the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) "independently monitor and evaluate" YOS and present the findings to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

e. Promote new group cultures which result in a transition to pro-social behavior; and

f. Provide offenders the opportunity to gradually reenter the community.[41]

Finally, as stated previously, the YOS statute mandates that the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) "independently monitor and evaluate"[42] YOS and present the findings to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. This report presents the findings of the third YOS evaluation conducted by DCJ.

[41] C.R.S. § 18-1.3-407(3)(a-f)

[42] C.R.S. § 18-1.3-407(10)(b)

Section 2:

Research Questions and Study Design

Research Questions

The following questions guided the current evaluation (the methods of data collection are included in italics):

1. Per Colorado Revised Statute §18-1.3-407(10)(b), is the current operation of YOS consistent with statute?
   a. Does the system provide for teaching offenders self-discipline by providing clear consequences for inappropriate behavior?
      – *Interviews, focus groups*
   b. Does the system include a daily regimen of physical training, self-discipline exercises, education and work programs, meaningful interaction? Does the system include a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance?
      – *Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires*
   c. Does the system use staff role models and mentors to promote pro-social behavior?
      – *Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires*
   d. Does the system provide offenders with instruction on problem-solving skills and the use of cognitive behavior strategies?
      – *Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires*
   e. Does the system promote pro-social behavior?
      – *Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires*
   f. Does the system provide offenders the opportunity to gradually reenter the community?
      – *Interviews, focus groups*

2. What are the current and overall characteristics of the YOS population? Have these changed over time?
   – *DOC electronic data set*

3. Are YOS offenders more serious than those sentenced to the Division of Youth Corrections (in the juvenile justice system) and less serious than those sentenced to prison? (That is, is the YOS population unique?)
   – *DOC electronic data set and Judicial Branch filing, conviction and placement data*

4. What is the new filing rate of individuals released from YOS since 1994?
   – *DOC electronic data set and Judicial Branch filing and conviction data*

Institutional Review Board Approval

Researchers obtained permission from an independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct interviews, focus groups and surveys with YOS staff and focus groups and surveys with offenders. The process of gaining approval for face-to-face contact with research subjects ensures that adequate steps will be taken to guarantee voluntary participation in the study and that privacy protections are in place.

Data Collection

Data were collected between May and August 2012, and were obtained from multiple sources. Quantitative data were obtained from the Department of Corrections and the Judicial Branch (case comparison information, and filing and conviction data). Qualitative data were collected from interviews with staff, focus groups and surveys with residents and staff, a limited amount of on-site observations, and document reviews.

Quantitative Data

Recidivism and offender profile information required quantitative data. Recidivism was defined as a new felony filing within two years of release from the YOS. Recidivism data were obtained from the Judicial Branch. Additionally, to compare those sentenced to YOS with those sentenced to DOC and the Division of Youth Corrections' commitment population, case information at sentencing was obtained from the Judicial Branch. DOC's Office of Planning and Analysis provided information on all YOS admissions through July 2012.

Qualitative Data

Face-to-face semi-structured *interviews* lasting between one and two hours were conducted with 10 YOS administrators and staff.[43] Administrative officials were selected purposefully whereas other staff were selected randomly and stratified by shift and assignment. A total of 36 pages of interview notes were analyzed to identify patterns and themes. Interview questions explored a number of program goals, policies and procedures, the impact of the program on residents, staff work experiences, and questions specific to staff roles. Interview guides may be found in Appendix A.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews lasting between one and two hours were conducted with 10 YOS administrators and staff.

Researchers convened a total of 20 *focus groups* ranging in size from two to eight participants and consisting of staff or residents. Staff participants were selected randomly after stratification by assignment and shift. Offender participants were selected randomly after stratification by housing unit. Two offender focus groups were purposefully selected due to those offenders' unique perspectives: one for women, and one for men who had been originally sentenced to prison and received sentencing reconsiderations and were resentenced to YOS. Ten Phase III participants engaged in two focus groups.

Like the interviews, focus groups were an important source of information: "Focus groups… work particularly well to determine the perceptions, feelings, and manner of thinking of consumers about products, services, or opportunities."[44] Focus groups involve the use of predetermined, open-ended questions that are asked in real-life situations. This type of research has the advantage of being low in cost and can provide "speedy results."[45] A total of 117 pages of focus group notes were analyzed to identify patterns and themes. Focus group guides may be found in Appendix A. The following list describes the focus groups:

Researchers convened a total of 20 focus groups ranging in size from two to eight participants and consisting of staff or residents.

Offenders

- 1 group of 4 male residents under 18 years of age
- 1 group of 8 female residents
- 1 group of 2 female residents (follow-up focus group)
- 1 group of 3 Phase II male residents
- 1 group of 6 IDO male residents
- 3 groups of Phase I male residents (2 groups of 8, 1 group of 7)
- 1 group of 3 male residents reconsidered from adult facilities
- 2 groups of Phase III participants

---

[43] Semi-structured interviews are guided by the research questions and allow the interview to occur as a discussion. This type of interview is appropriate for questions concerning process, and allows questioning about the reasoning and resources involved in the program, the conditions necessary to sustain change, and so forth. Interview data reflect individual perceptions and experiences, and researchers analyze these data for themes and to provide context for other information obtained for the evaluation [Pawson, R. & Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage].

[44] Krueger, R. A. (1988). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. New York: Sage Publications. Page 29.

[45] Ibid.

Staff

- 1 group of 5 day shift security staff
- 1 group of 3 swing shift security staff
- 1 group of 6 graveyard security staff
- 1 group of 6 education staff
- 1 group of 8 housing staff – Phase I /day shift
- 1 group of 6 housing staff – Phase I/swing shift
- 1 group of 2 housing staff – IDO
- 1 group of 2 housing staff – Phase II (combination of day and swing shift)
- 1 group of 6 lieutenants

Two survey instruments were also used to collect information about perceptions and concerns of both YOS administrators/staff and offenders.

Two *survey instruments* were also used to collect information about perceptions and concerns of both YOS administrators/staff and offenders. The instruments were self-administered paper/pencil questionnaires. Resident questionnaires were three pages in length with 23 questions. Ninety-nine offenders participated in the survey, establishing a response rate of 49%.[46] Staff questionnaires had 16 questions and were two pages in length. One hundred and twenty-eight (128) staff participated in the survey for a response rate of 73%. The questionnaires are available in Appendix A.

Offender Sample Description

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 shows some disparity in the distribution of race/ethnicity and gender of the YOS population at the time of the study and those agreeing to participate in the resident survey. A smaller proportion of Whites and Blacks/African Americans and a larger proportion of Hispanics participated in the evaluation compared to the overall distribution of the general YOS population (Phase III is not included in this analysis). The average age of survey respondents was 19.2 years with an average time in YOS of nearly 19 months; the average age of the current population was 17.9 at the time of the survey, and their average time in YOS was 21.5 months. Offender study participants, then, are older on average by about two years, and have spent, on average, about 2.5 months less time in YOS compared to the general program population.

Offender study participants, then, are older on average by about two years, and have spent, on average, about 2.5 months less time in YOS compared to the general program population.

[46] Note that surveys were not administered to YOS Phase III offenders.

Table 2.1. **Race/ethnicity and gender of YOS offender survey respondents compared to YOS total population at time of survey**

Race	Survey respondents (n=99)	YOS population at time of survey (n=219)
White	20%	25%
Hispanic	53%	49%
Black	21%	22%
Asian	2%	1%
Native American	4%	3%
Gender		
Males	91%	96%
Females	9%	4%

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

Table 2.2. **Phase of YOS offender respondents at time of survey (n=99)**

Phase	Male (n=90)	Female (n=9)
IDO	10%	0%
Phase I	84%	78%
Phase II	6%	22%
Total	100%	100%

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed using the statistical software package SPSS.

Limitations of This Study

Anything short of a 100% response rate for study participants raises questions of sample bias. Approximately half (49%) of the offender population and 73% of the YOS staff agreed to participate in the study. Those not participating may be a select group that is unlike those from whom data were obtained, and the extent of bias remains unknown. Offender study participants were slightly older, on average, compared to the entire population, and slightly less likely to be White.

Additionally, time and resource constraints precluded researchers from observing routine activities in the YOS setting including program groups and program participants. Also, carefully evaluating the specific program components, such as Guided Group Interaction (GGI), Quick Skills and vocational training was beyond the scope of this study yet is central to the understanding of how YOS works to impact the lives of offenders. Finally, Phase lll occurs across the state and minimal information was obtained from two Phase lll focus groups (one in Fort Collins and one in Denver), so this evaluation focuses almost entirely on YOS at the Pueblo facility.

Approximately half (49%) of the offender population and 73% of the YOS staff agreed to participate in the study.

Section 3:

Findings

This section begins with the research questions that were enumerated in Section 2 and that were derived from the YOS statute. Additional findings are included at the end of the section.

1. Per Colorado Revised Statute 18-1.3-407(10)(b), is the current operation of YOS consistent with statute?

a. Does the system provide for teaching offenders self-discipline by providing clear consequences for inappropriate behavior?

Yes, YOS operations appear to be generally consistent with statute, and staff and offenders reported that there are consequences for inappropriate behavior. Citing behavioral learning theory,[47] which recommends the use of at least four positive sanctions for every negative sanction, the warden promotes the use of immediate and meaningful sanctions for both pro-social behavior and misconduct. Beginning in IDO and through Phase II, each offender's chronological records (chrons) of behavior are reviewed weekly and monthly by staff to determine how the offender is progressing. The use of chrons is the primary method of documenting offenders' pro-social and antisocial behavior.

Consequences for negative behaviors range from revocation to the Department of Corrections' traditional prison system, to regression to lower behavioral status levels,[48] to negative chronological reports. For serious misconduct, disciplinary measures also include regression to the Intake, Diagnostic and Orientation Unit (IDO) for offenders receiving punitive segregation, remediation, removal

Consequences for negative behaviors range from revocation to the Department of Corrections' traditional prison system, to regression to lower behavioral status levels, to negative chronological reports.

[47] See Andrews, D.A., & Bonta, J. (2006). *The psychology of criminal conduct*. (4th Ed.). Los Angeles: Anderson Publishing; Andrews, D.A. (1979). *The dimensions of correctional counseling and supervision process in probation and parole*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services; and Trotter, C. (1999). *Working with involuntary clients: A guide to practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[48] YOS has implemented a behavioral "level" system where those with higher status have greater privileges (see Figure 3.1). This system is described later in the report.

from population, and special management consequences. The use of the Code of Penal Discipline (COPD) as a sanction at YOS is discouraged because these are not immediate (COPDs require a hearing) and are less meaningful because they do not result in loss of earned time at YOS, as is the case in the regular prison system.[49] One staff stated that:

> *We try to stay away from COPDs here because they are not very effective. It's only effective in a negative way, and COPDs keep them out of school. Sometimes they want to screw up to miss school so we intentionally don't COPD them.*

Staff focus group participants reported that many more sanctions than rewards are available to them.

The most frequently mentioned incentives awarded to residents, according to the offender survey, pertained to visitation, phone calls, sleeping in, and watching television. Those who have earned higher level status are allowed movies, late nights, arts, access to the computer lab, additional recreational activities, and additional canteen purchases. These activities are highly valued by the offenders, according to resident survey data.

When questioned about the availability to staff of sanctions and rewards for immediate responses to resident behaviors, staff focus group participants reported that many more sanctions than rewards are available to them. Staff reported that the primary reward—and often the only reward--available to them in-the-moment was a positive chron, which has the power to affect offenders' status, as discussed below. Staff consistently identified the need for more positive rewards to acknowledge pro-social behavior by residents.

Among the most reliable findings, however, in reports from both staff and residents, was inconsistency in the delivery of both positive and negative sanctions. This inconsistency was a source of frustration for both staff and offenders. Staff noted inconsistency across units and shifts and within shifts, causing confusion for offenders. Offenders frequently noted "the rules keep changing" and that some staff appeared to follow the rules while others did not.

Among the most reliable findings in reports from both staff and residents was inconsistency in the delivery of both positive and negative sanctions. This inconsistency was a source of frustration for both staff and offenders.

The inconsistency in rule enforcement has important consequences for the offenders' status in YOS. Apart from the offenders' educational activities, their status level seems to be each offender's primary focus, based on survey responses. Positive behavior is rewarded with increases in status and accompanying privileges; higher status offenders have many more privileges. Frustrated offenders reported the ease with which status can be lost due to staff discretion: Status levels and the accompanying privileges take months to establish but can be lost quickly with what some residents perceive as the sometimes arbitrary enforcement, or lack of enforcement, of rules. A primary way of moving up the level system is to accumulate positive chron entries; conversely, the accumulation of negative chrons can lead to reductions in status.

---

[49] YOS does not provide for earned time. Sentences are served day for day.

For example, it is not uncommon for offenders to request documentation with a written chron to reflect positive behavior, but some staff view offenders' requests for positive chron reports as manipulative behavior and so do not respond to the request. Other staff tend to look for opportunities to reward pro-social behavior; these staff document a positive chron regardless of an offender's request. Additionally, some staff do not believe in rewarding offenders with positive chrons for behaviors that staff believe should be part of the offender's regular responsibilities, while other staff believe in rewarding as much positive behavior as possible. Inconsistency in the application of sanctions and incentives means inconsistent access to increasing status and the accompanying privileges.

Staff frequently mentioned that they valued the discretion afforded to them to tailor their response to each offender. This discretion allows staff to make consequences meaningful.

While inconsistency was a commonly reported problem, staff frequently mentioned that they valued the discretion afforded to them to tailor their response to each offender. This discretion allows staff to make consequences meaningful, and many YOS staff discussed their commitment to individualizing the sanctioning experience. One staff member said, "We do what is best for the offender…[consequences] need to be different for different offenders." Some staff stated that they try to maximize the learning experience by ensuring that the consequences link to the behavior. As one staff focus group participant stated:

> *We consistently confront, but we may seem inconsistent in actual consequences. This may look different to different offenders—but the consequence is tailored to the offender and [sometimes] the offender won't understand that.*

Another staff member put it this way during a focus group:

> *When it comes to discipline we have a lot of leeway and a lot more options than just a COPD. This helps us to control actions and mentor at the same time. We have ways to work with offenders in a more positive way. Consequences are related to the behavior and it's completely up to the staff member.*

This perspective is indeed aligned with DOC Administrative Regulation 1600-01 which reads, in part, as follows: There will be privilege levels which individual offenders must earn; infractions will be followed by immediate and *logical consequences* with opportunities to re-earn the privileges by rule compliance and goal attainment (emphasis added).

It will remain a challenge for YOS administrators to address inconsistency while also promoting the use of discretion in providing meaningful responses to offenders' behaviors.

It will remain a challenge for YOS administrators to address inconsistency while also promoting the use of discretion in providing meaningful responses to offenders' behaviors.

b. Does the system include a daily regimen of physical training, self-discipline exercises, education and work programs, and meaningful interaction? Does the system include a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance?

Does the system include a daily regimen of physical training, self-discipline exercises, education and work programs, and meaningful interaction? Yes, YOS includes a focus on physical training and self-discipline, along with education, work programs and meaningful interaction. The Intake, Diagnostic and Orientation (IDO) unit is a high security unit where all new arrivals to YOS are assigned. Offenders spend four weeks in IDO. In addition to a comprehensive diagnostic component designed to evaluate each offender, the YOS *Drill Instructor Manual* (March 2012, page 8) specifies that the Orientation Training Phase is a no-privilege, strict, highly-structured, physically demanding period designed specifically to:

YOS includes a focus on physical training and self-discipline, along with education, work programs and meaningful interaction.

a. Identify and break gang identity;[50]
b. Determine each offender's medical, mental health, academic, career and technical education status;
c. Drain destructive energies; and
d. Develop rapport between DOC employees and offenders.

The *Drill Instructor Manual* includes a detailed explanation of the "roles and qualities of the IDO drill instructor" and these include a respect for ethics, values, professionalism and for "the worth and dignity of human beings" (page 13).

According to data collected, many of the residents viewed IDO and the focus on discipline as valuable. However, some felt disrespected and condescended to. Inconsistent direction caused confusion and frustration for some offenders. For example, offenders reported that orders regarding clothing can change from day to day: An offender was told by one instructor to wear his uniform with his pant legs tucked into his socks and on another day a different instructor told him to roll up his pant legs. This inconsistency leaves offenders not knowing what is expected from them, and in some circumstances can result in disciplinary responses for not following orders.

Regarding education and work programs, as required in statute, YOS offers both GED training and a high school diploma. Those with shorter sentences are enrolled in the GED program whereas those with longer sentences are admitted to Century High School, the YOS secondary school that operates with a letter of agreement through Pueblo School District 60. Century High School operates year-round in the facility with 16-week trimesters. According to DOC's *YOS Annual Report* (FY 2011, page 11), YOS offenders have an

[50] Those with gang affiliation are significantly more likely to terminate unsuccessfully. See *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011* for a complete description of YOS. Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis. Colorado Springs, CO.

average of three high school credits when they arrive at the facility. School District 60 requires 22 high school credits. The teacher-to-student ratio at YOS is approximately 1:10 for the purpose of providing individualized attention needed to engage at-risk students.[51]

The Colorado Community College System has approved the YOS career and technical education programs. All YOS career and technical instructors are credentialed in their trade and up to 45 hours of course work is transferable to a Colorado community college toward an Associate of Applied Science degree. Ninety offenders earned college credits through this program in FY 2011. Courses include business, business computers, electronics, multimedia production, automotive, janitorial, barber/cosmetology, and graphic arts.[52]

In FY 2012, 41 offenders received high school diplomas and 20 were awarded GED certificates, according to YOS administrators. In addition, YOS offers special education services and in FY 2011, 35 offenders received these services, and five of these received a high school diploma or GED. Further, in FY 2011 149 YOS offenders were enrolled in academic programs, 114 were enrolled in "career and technical" education programs, and 28 were enrolled in college courses.[53] Additionally, 5,726 library books were checked out during FY 2011 and 474 interlibrary loan requests were made.[54] This activity underscores residents' interest in the library. Information obtained from focus groups with offenders reflected a strong interest in increased access to the library, a need for more recent material, and suggestions for a larger library space.

In FY 2012, 41 offenders received high school diplomas and 20 were awarded GED certificates, according to YOS administrators. In addition, YOS offers special education services and in FY 2011, 35 offenders received these services, and five of these received a high school diploma or GED.

In surveys, focus groups, and staff interviews, both residents and staff consistently stated that the education (including vocational) component of YOS is its most valuable feature. In fact, 87% of YOS resident survey respondents reported that they would choose YOS again if given the opportunity, and nearly every respondent cited the reason for choosing YOS again was the reduction in time (compared to their prison sentence) and the educational opportunities.[55] Nevertheless, data gathered for the evaluation suggest a need for more post-secondary classes for those in Phase I. Phase I is the longest component of YOS, and after individuals receive their GED or high school diploma, there is a decrease in available educational opportunities for offenders. Small classroom sizes mean that not everyone can participate in available college courses, yet there may be an opportunity to provide life skills training that are typically reserved for Phase II offenders. As one resident stated in their answer to a survey question about suggestions for improving YOS:

---

[51] For a complete description of the YOS population see *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis.

[52] Ibid, page 11-12.

[53] *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis.

[54] Ibid. Page 12.

[55] Nonwhites were especially likely to report that the best thing about YOS was the educational opportunities; whites were more likely to report that, specifically, college was the best thing about YOS.

Offer more college classes, possibly core classes like math, science, etc. Offer classes that teach stuff like filing taxes, paying bills, general life skills....

This staff member might agree:

YOS is actually actively trying to make a difference by educating offenders in life skills, personal skills, and recreation skills. I still think we can do more.

Positive peer culture was developed with the assumption that as peers learn to trust, respect and take responsibility for the behaviors of others in the group they can influence each other in a manner that will decrease antisocial behavior and increase pro-social attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

Additionally, the need for expanded educational programming is noted in the FY 2011 YOS annual report. The report recommends (on page 31) that YOS administrators "[e]valuate and align educational services to correspond with the increased need for vocational, career and technical education; [and] continue to improve the apprenticeship opportunities offered at YOS" in response to recent changes in legislation[56] that have increased the average age of offenders sentenced to YOS.

Positive peer culture. Regarding meaningful interaction, as required by statute, YOS uses positive peer culture as a fundamental method of teaching offenders pro-social behavior. Because peers are one of the most influential aspects of a young person's life, they can both encourage and discourage antisocial behaviors.[57] Social learning theory states that youth can develop self-worth, significance, dignity, and responsibility through commitment to the positive values of helping and caring for others[58] and can learn how to behave appropriately or inappropriately through the observation of peers that that they respect and look to for guidance.[59] Positive peer culture was developed with the assumption that as peers learn to trust, respect and take responsibility for the behaviors of others in the group they can influence each other in a manner that will decrease antisocial behavior and increase pro-social attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.[60] If delinquency is influenced by one's peer group, individuals will respond to peer pressure for change, positive or negative.[61] Within the construct of positive peer culture, peers will develop and maintain positive behaviors and characteristics including:

---

[56] House Bill 09-1122, creating C.R.S. § 18-1.3-407.5, expanded the age of sentencing from prior to the 19th birthday to prior to the 21st birthday. This statute contained a repeal date of October 1, 2012.

[57] Brown, B., Clasen, D., & Eicher, S. (1986). Perceptions of peer pressure per conformity dispositions, and self-reported behavior among adolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 521-530.

[58] Brendtro, L.K. & Vorrath, H.H. (1985). *Positive peer culture* (2nd Ed.). Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

[59] Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Halll; Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and actions: A social-cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[60] Ryan, J.P. (2006). Dependent youth in juvenile justice: Do positive peer culture programs work for victims of child maltreatment? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16(5), 511-519; Zimpfer, D.G. (1992). Group work with delinquents. *The Journal Specialist in Group Work*, 17(2), 116-126.

[61] Harstad, C.D. (1976). Guided group interaction: Positive peer culture. *Child Care Quarterly*, 5(2), 109-120.

- A sense of belonging;
- A code of conduct that assures a safe environment and promotes pro-social behavior;
- Individual members responding positively to the influences of the group;
- Each member has a sense that they can significantly contribute in a positive manner to the group;
- Individuals demonstrate social responsibility to the group and the group assists in reinforcing pro-social behavior; and
- Criticism of maladaptive behavior.[62]

YOS uses the behavioral management/level system to promote a positive peer culture, and those who reach Phoenix status become role models for other YOS residents. It should be noted, however, that implementing a positive peer culture is difficult with delinquent youth because, as researchers have found, juveniles are in fact learning from and being reinforced by the "leaders" in their community, and the behaviors may not be the positive, pro-social behaviors intended by therapists and correctional personnel.[63] Thus, involvement and supervision/intervention of staff is necessary to ensure that positive behaviors are being displayed and encouraged by the peer community.[64] It is in this context of instilling a positive peer culture that staff consistency, then, becomes especially important. Moreover, one study of former juvenile offenders who were interviewed about their experience with a positive peer culture found that criticism from one's peers was not something the participants viewed positively. Instead they developed the skill of "fronting" where they fabricated problems that were easy to handle and would get them through the group therapy successfully without having to truly reveal themselves.[65] This finding is particularly relevant since many of the YOS residents reported that "fronting" was commonly used by those who were insincerely engaged in GGI assignments.

Involvement and supervision/intervention of staff is necessary to ensure that positive behaviors are being displayed and encouraged by the peer community. It is in this context of instilling a positive peer culture that staff consistency, then, becomes especially important.

Does the system include a component for a tiered system for swift and strict discipline for noncompliance? Yes, a core component of YOS is the nine-level behavioral management system which links behavioral expectations to privileges. See Figure 3.1 for a partial description of the expectations and privileges associated with the behavioral management system. To progress in the level system, individuals are required to behave according to YOS norms and expectations. These norms and expectations are posted in the housing units and articulated in the staff and YOS *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual:* "We confront in order to maintain these expected behaviors and, therefore, help one another." In addition, the following normative behaviors are listed (on page 31):

---

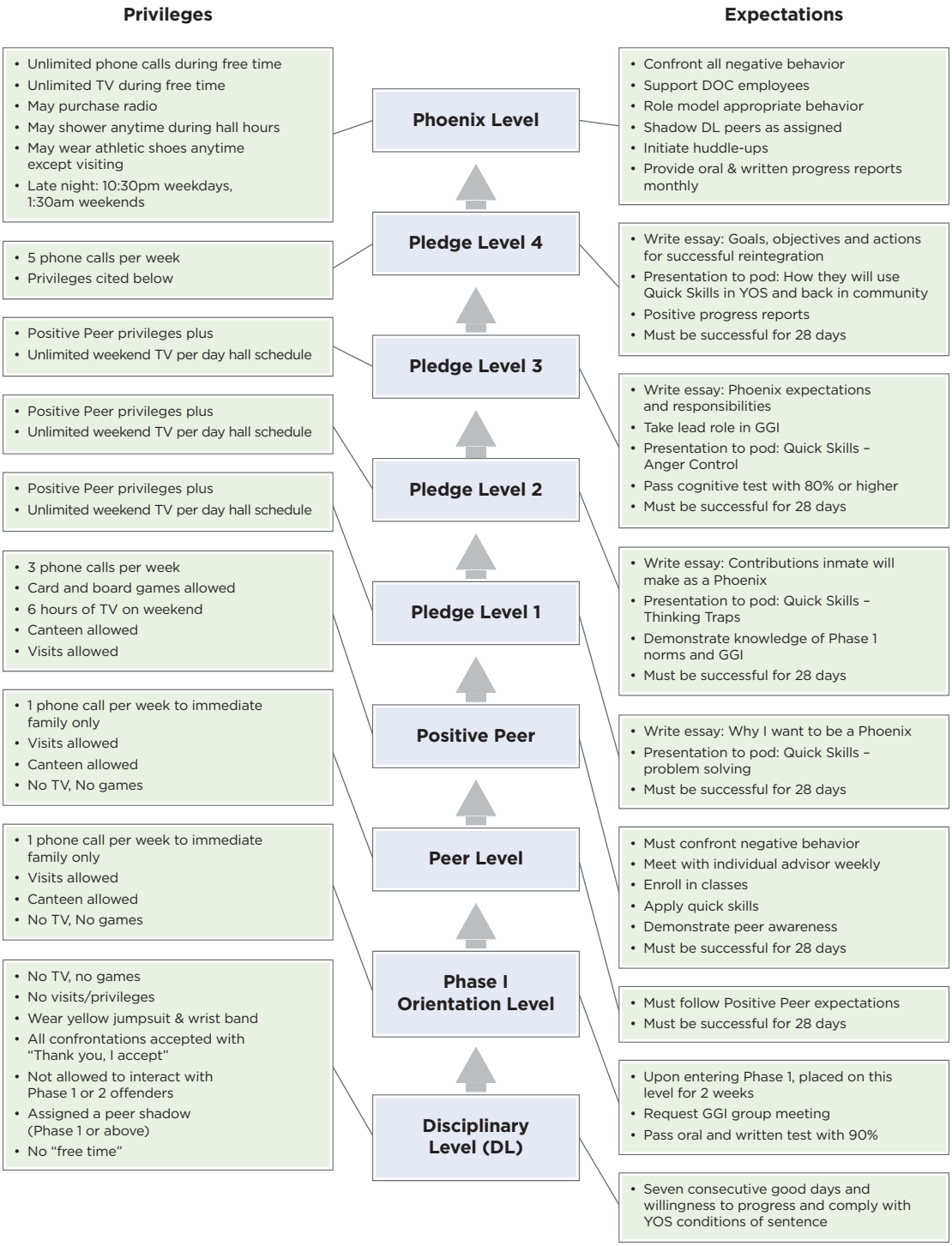
[62] http://www.troubledteenblog.com/2008/07/positive-peer-culture-adolescent-residential-treatment-philosophy/

[63] Dishion, T.J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, 54(9), 755-764.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Kapp, S.A. (2000). Positive peer culture: The viewpoint of former clients. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy*, 10(4), 175-189.

Figure 3.1. **YOS status levels, privileges, and expectations**



1. We do not engage in or support any gang activities.
2. We respect ourselves, others, and property.
3. We maintain order and respect all safety issues.
4. We do not violate the security of this facility.
5. We maintain cleanliness and hygiene at all times.
6. We consider school sacred and promote the value of education.
7. We consider GGI (Guided Group Interaction) sacred.
8. We do not engage in any sexual or inappropriate relationships.[66]

The positive peer culture and the status level system both require that individuals become proficient in GGI, Quick Skills[67], and anger management techniques. These are all cognitive-behavioral learning strategies. Proficiency in these techniques is required for upward movement in the level system. In addition, residents are expected to confront the negative behavior of their peers, using skills they acquire. A staff member, commenting on the positive peer culture and the expectation that offenders will confront each other, described offenders confronting each other:

> *Offenders will help with other offenders and tell them 'Hey, security isn't kidding, step up.' An offender will say 'Hey, let me talk to him' [when a fellow offender is having an issue]. The staff says 'Sure, but you talk to him in front of me.'*

The behavioral management system is central to the YOS offender experience. According to offender survey data, 60% of the YOS respondents reported that they had been regressed in the level system: 68% of Blacks and Hispanics reported being regressed compared with 47% of whites. Three-fourths (77%) reported being placed in punitive segregation: 72% of Whites, 82% of Hispanics, and 65% of Blacks. In fact, 85% of those in Phase 1—the longest phase in the YOS—reported being temporarily placed in punitive segregation at some point during their time at YOS.

According to offender survey data, this merit system is extremely frustrating for those who have low status or who have had their higher status revoked to a lower status, and very positive and satisfying for those who have achieved the highest status with the most privileges. The highest status is Phoenix Level, and those who reach this level have unlimited phone calls and unlimited TV during free time periods; both TV and phone calls are important incentives, according to survey respondents.[68] Nearly 25% of the YOS population was at the Phoenix Level in the summer of 2012. Most Phoenix Level residents live in a separate pod, called the Incentive Pod (I-Pod). At the time of the study, the 54-person pod was full and approximately nine additional Phoenix's were living in the general population units awaiting space in the I-Pod.

---

[66] *Phase I Orientation Manual* (January 2012). Pages 26-27.

[67] Quick Skills is a cognitive-behavioral skill building package that is taught in discrete units or combined into more comprehensive training. Units include, among others, Thinking Traps, Problem Solving, Anger Control, and Aggression Replacement, Employment Skills, Parenting Skills, and Financial Management.

[68] Complaints about TV restrictions were abundant in offender surveys and focus groups: *In our pods we're not allowed to sleep, can't watch TV. There is nothing to do in the pod.*

During the course of the study, YOS officials reconsidered the policy of prohibiting contact with immediate pro-social family as part of the sanctioning process, and in August 2012 issued a new policy allowing contact with immediate family members regardless of status.

Visits and phone calls are considered premium activities by YOS offenders, and hence can be powerful incentives to reward positive behavior. However, focus group data from both staff and offenders indicate that these are not being used as incentives as much as for consequences for misconduct and so are much more likely to be withdrawn in response to negative behavior. Yet the practice of withholding contact with pro-social individuals may contradict research that suggests strong family ties and social support are keys to successful reintegration: "As the investment in social bonds grows, the incentive for avoiding crime increases because more is at stake..."[69] During the course of the study, YOS officials reconsidered the policy of prohibiting contact with immediate pro-social family as part of the sanctioning process, and in August 2012 issued a new policy allowing contact with immediate family members regardless of status.

c. Does the system use staff role models and mentors to promote pro-social behavior?

Yes, YOS intends to use staff role models and mentors to promote pro-social behavior. Staff are required by state statute and administrative rules and expectations to act as role models and mentors to YOS offenders. The first paragraph of the YOS *Teachers Handbook* states the following: "Through your actions and spoken words, you will model the appropriate manner your students should behave and interact with others."[70] Likewise, the *Drill Instructor Manual* specifies, in the discussion of the IDO unit and staff goals: "Be a role model" (page 9) and "[a] good drill instructor must demonstrate by strictly following regulations to set an example for the offender population" (page 13).

Most YOS employees who participated in the study seem to take this expectation seriously, as these Staff focus group participants summarized:

> *Everyone's role here is the same: to positively affect these guys so they're better once they get out. That's the role from the warden, to a case manager, to a teacher, to a security officer.*
>
> *We are the teacher, mentor, step parent to teach them ... skills. We try to give them tools to manage their behavior.*
>
> *You have to be a role model; you have to be able to model for the offenders.... These offenders haven't had any positive male role models in their lives. We're the first male that has ever talked to them rather than yelled at them.*

---

[69] National Research Council. (2009). *Parole, Desistance from Crime, and Community Integration. Committee on Community Supervision and Desistance from Crime*. Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Page 2.

[70] YOS Teacher Handbook, page 6.

Cognitive ed and counseling is the best thing about this place; they don't get that at the adult facility. They have the GGIs and the one-on-ones. There's a lot of talk [with staff] about their lives and improving their situation.

All but one staff survey respondent answered "Yes" to the question: "Do you consider yourself a role model?"[71] In focus groups and in surveys, many staff discussed their responsibilities regarding role modeling and mentoring, and many felt proud of being able and expected to accomplish this goal. Indeed, this concept seemed to be part of the YOS staff culture. However, not all staff met the expectations of the offenders participating in the study. One resident survey respondent said: "*...they swear at us and expect us to respect them. That's the wrong thing here.*" This assessment was confirmed by offender focus group participants. Several offenders noted that while some of the staff treat them respectfully, others treat them poorly and do not seem to operate according to the YOS philosophy.

In focus groups and in surveys, many staff discussed their responsibilities regarding role modeling and mentoring, and many felt proud of being able and expected to accomplish this goal. Indeed, this concept seemed to be part of the YOS staff culture. However, not all staff met the expectations of the offenders participating in the study.

d. Does the system provide offenders with instruction on problem-solving skills and the use of cognitive behavior strategies?

Yes, YOS offers several types of problem-solving instruction and cognitive behavioral approaches, including Guided Group Interaction (GGI),[72] Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens,[73] sex offender treatment,[74] anger management classes, victim empathy class,[75] substance abuse classes, Quick Skills (cognitive skill-building techniques), Baby-Think-It-Over,[76] and self-help groups.[77] Evaluating the delivery, content, and fidelity of specific program elements such as these, is beyond the scope of this evaluation. While survey data revealed that some offenders, especially younger offenders, valued these programs, GGI and Quick Skills require small groups and the physical plant, with 54-person pods, makes it difficult to pull together a meaningful small group. In particular, it is difficult for a small group

---

[71] The respondent who did not answer "Yes" answered the question with "Sometimes." None of the respondents answered "No" to the question.

[72] GGI uses group dynamics and peer pressure to promote pro-social behaviors (YOS *Annual Report*, FY11, page 6). Offenders are assigned to a specific GGI group.

[73] This is a relatively new addition to the YOS cognitive-behavioral curriculum, with 21 offenders completing the class by April 2012.

[74] The sex offender therapist position was not filled during the period of the evaluation. In the prior five years, approximately 26 YOS offenders participated in sex offender treatment, according to a memorandum to the YOS warden from C. Olin, the sex offender treatment program coordinator, dated March 29, 2012.

[75] The curriculum for "Victim Impact: Listen and Learn" was developed by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.

[76] This Phase II program involves providing the offenders, both male and female, with computer-simulated infant dolls that cry when they need something (to be fed, changed, etc.). The women keep these dolls for a period of four weeks; the men keep them for one week.

[77] In addition, preparation for the 26-module *Thinking for a Change*, developed by the National Institute of Corrections, was being implemented as the evaluation was underway. *Inside Out Dad* is a parenting class taught by volunteers and available to all offenders. Between February 2008 and May 2011, 130 offenders completed the program. Efforts are underway to begin teaching this class again.

to have the privacy necessary to deal with problems that require GGI and Quick Skills.[78] It is noteworthy that many of the women, in particular, valued "huddle ups" which is a 10-minute cognitive behavioral technique for gathering feedback on a problem, but there were only nine women at the time of this evaluation, (which is indicative of the typical size of the female population). Staff reported that the huddle ups work best with small groups, and that it is difficult to conduct meaningful huddle ups with the large numbers of men in the pods.

e. Does the system promote pro-social behavior?

Privileges are earned under a merit system, and these increase with the offender's status levels but can be lost due to problematic behavior or rule infractions.

A primary method of promoting pro-social behavior is the use of a behavioral management/level system to gain privileges, as discussed previously (see Figure 3.1). Privileges are earned under a merit system, and these increase with the offender's status levels but can be lost due to problematic behavior or rule infractions. Behavioral expectations are articulated in the *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual* (2012). Privileges include visitation, telephone calls, television, radios, and canteen items.[79] Inconsistency in rule enforcement, and inconsistency in general practice was a concern frequently mentioned by both staff and offenders on surveys and in focus groups. These inconsistencies, as discussed previously, can have important consequences for the residents' status/privileges, making loss of privileges or lack of progress dependent on staff behavior as much as offender behavior.

f. Does the system provide offenders the opportunity to gradually reenter the community?

Yes, Phases II and III are designed to gradually reintegrate the offender into the community. The Phase II component of YOS is referred to as pre-release,[80] and it is occurs during the last three months of an offender's incarceration at the Pueblo facility. Phase II includes supervised scheduled appointments and activities in the community. According to the DOC's annual YOS report, Phase II is intended to reinforce the Phase I goal of promoting pro-social behavior while enabling the offender to participate in community activities. To this end, offenders must complete at least 40 hours of community service. Phase II focuses on building on the academic skills acquired in Phase I, and offenders participate in career planning (writing resumes, cover letters, and felony explanation letters), goal setting, interviewing skills, and job seeking skills. Offenders must attend classes in nutrition and food preparation, budgeting and

The Phase II component of YOS is referred to as pre-release, and it is occurs during the last three months of an offender's incarceration at the Pueblo facility.

---

[78] Only 16% of resident survey respondents stated that GGI was helpful; blacks were more likely than other race/ethnic groups to mention the value of GGI.

[79] *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis.

[80] See DOC's *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, FY11*, page 21.

personal safety.[81] An important component of Phase II is the acquisition of birth certificates, social security cards, and Colorado identification cards that are necessary for job applications and housing.

Transitional team meetings include YOS staff from Phases I, II, and III, clinical staff, the offender's educational advisor, family members and relevant community service providers. These meetings occur during Phase II to develop an individualized supervision and reentry plan for Phase III. Phase III consists of six to 12 months of intensive supervision in the community.[82] According to DOC documentation, actual time in Phase III is based on (1) the duration of the offender's sentence to YOS, and (2) demonstrated and documented positive behavior and program participation. Those with positive behavior are granted release to Phase III earlier and have a longer transition period in the community.[83]

Each individual in Phase III is required to find employment and pay restitution. Each is evaluated and may receive additional community-based treatment in anger management, domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or sex offender issues. However, this additional treatment was seen as problematic and unnecessary by some. In fact, members of one Phase III focus group emphatically stated that they all have to repeat the same classes while in the community and that it interferes with their jobs. One focus group member put it like this:

> *I have had 1000's of hours of drug and alcohol groups. It was helpful then [in Pueblo], but now it's just repetitive and stupid to do it out here. They force us to come to these groups when we'd rather be working.*

Offenders are allowed to release only to communities where YOS has contracted for services: the Denver metro area, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Grand Junction.[84] These contracted services are designed to support offenders as they transfer to community living. According to the YOS *Annual Report*, the Community Transition Program operates a residential setting in Fort Collins and assists offenders with clothing, transportation and medical services, while also providing services in the areas of employment, education, cognitive skills, and community activities.[85] Family Preservation involves the development of a community supervision plan by the YOS Transition Team and the offender's parents, family or sponsor with the purpose of supporting the offender in achieving the goals of community reintegration. Independent living is designed for those individuals who lack family support or for whom returning home is not conducive to successful re-entry. Contracted support services "assist the offender in securing an apartment, furniture, food, and other

---

[81] Ibid, page 22.

[82] A gradual decrease in supervision intensity occurs with positive program participation and attainment of specific goals and objectives (see *YOS Annual Report FY11*, page 24).

[83] As previously noted, ICE detainees do not participate in Phase III.

[84] *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis. Page 26.

[85] Most of the description here is from the *Youthful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Please see pages 24-26 for a complete description of Phase III.

essentials."[86] YOS also contracts for day reporting services to provide a means for daily call-ins, urine analysis, breathalyzer, medication monitoring, and antabuse. Mentoring or life coaching services are available to YOS offenders who release to the Denver metro area and Fort Collins. Phase lll offenders are required to perform at least 60 hours of community service: "Community service allows the offender to give back something to society and exposes him/her to higher social and moral values."[87]

In the summer of 2012, 35 YOS offenders were in Phase lll, and 10 Phase lll offenders participated in focus groups for this study. In response to questions about whether YOS prepared them for transition, focus group participants reported the following:

> *Transition from Phase I to Phase II helps you get ready for the community.*
>
> *Phase II helped us learn how to get a job. Helped us to get out and get ready for jobs. It helped with resumes, and stuff.*
>
> *We have transition meetings with our parents or whoever we're going to go to. A parole officer is always there so we know what's expected of us when we get out.*
>
> *You have classes on your treatment plan if they think you need it.*
>
> *I got to Phase III and I was intent on going home.... They turned it on me and made me go here [Community Transition Program] instead. I got here and thought this is awesome.*
>
> *I like the job part of being here [Community Transition Program].*
>
> *If you get a job somewhere, [specific staff] will help you figure out how to ride the bus and get to your job. She'll ride the bus with you so you know what you're doing.*
>
> *They paid my security deposit and first three months rent.*
>
> *They put me in an internship to do landscaping, and got me the job.*

When asked how to improve YOS, one Phase lll offender summarized the comments from the group with the following statement:

> *Phase II ...outings need to be more than just community service. Phase II should be more about job prep. Teach us how to do taxes and stuff.*[88]

---

[86] Ibid, page 25.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Several Phase lll participants also mentioned that learning more about taxes and tax forms would be helpful.

Phase II residents unanimously agreed during focus groups that outings focused more on job preparation would be much more useful than participating in the large amount of community service they do. All three of the Phase II residents who participated in a focus group stated that they had done many more community service hours than was required and felt that the additional hours would have been better spent focusing on job attainment and retention.

Phase II residents who participated in a focus group stated that they had done many more community service hours than was required and felt that the additional hours would have been better spent focusing on job attainment and retention.

In addition, it is important to note that, when completing the questionnaires, many YOS study participants said that the education they were receiving at YOS—GED, college courses, and vocational training—was helping them prepare for life in the community. This was reiterated in focus groups where education was believed to be the primary way in which YOS prepares them for release into the community.

2. What are the current and overall (since 1994) characteristics of the YOS population? Have these changed over time?

According to data provided to DCJ by DOC, the demographic characteristics of the YOS population have remained fairly stable since 1995, when the first group of offenders was admitted. In large part, changes to the YOS population over time are a reflection of statutory modifications that affected the eligibility requirements. The average age at admission (Table 3.1) has increased somewhat in recent years from 16.6 to 18.5, which is to be expected since changes in 2010 removed most juveniles ages 14 and 15 from direct file consideration[89] and a 2009 statutory modification extended the age of sentencing to include 19 and 20 year olds.[90]

According to data provided to DCJ by DOC, the demographic characteristics of the YOS population have remained fairly stable since 1995, when the first group of offenders was admitted. In large part, changes to the YOS population over time are a reflection of statutory modifications that affected the eligibility requirements.

[89] C.R.S. § 19-2-517

[90] C.R.S. § 18-1.3-407. This legislation contains a repeal date of October 1, 2012.

Table 3.1. **YOS age at entry, 1994-2012**

FY	Average admit age	N
1994	16.6	24
1995	16.7	107
1996	16.5	111
1997	16.6	108
1998	16.6	89
1999	16.9	86
2000	16.9	99
2001	17.1	78
2002	16.8	65
2003	16.9	59
2004	16.8	67
2005	16.9	54
2006	17.2	58
2007	17.1	60
2008	16.9	59
2009	17.1	61
2010	17.5	84
2011	18.1	68
2012	18.5	77
Total	**17.0**	**1414**

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

In the earliest years of the YOS program, most intakes were 16 and 17 years old, as shown in Table 3.2. In more recent years, there have been fewer 16 year olds and more 18, 19, and 20 year olds, reflecting the change in age eligibility pursuant to C.R.S. §19-2-517.

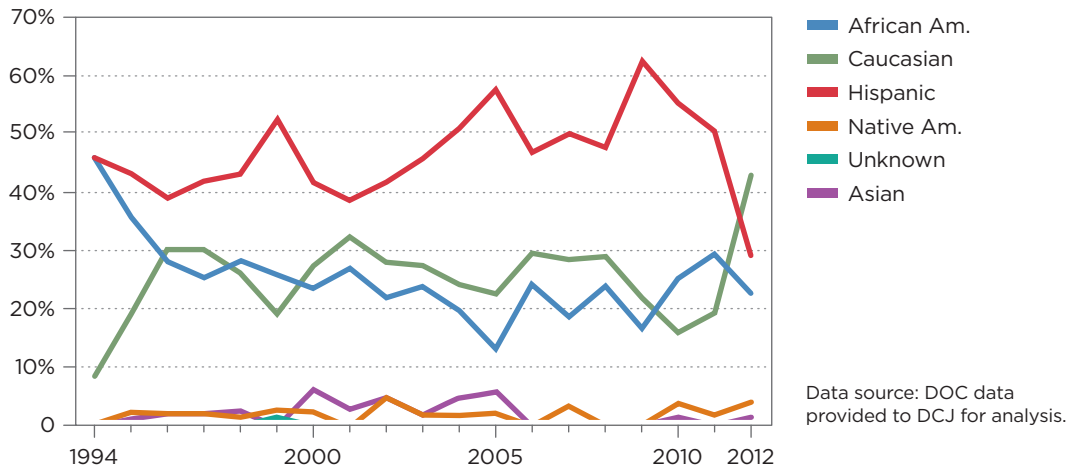
Table 3.2. **Age at intake, 1994-2012**

FY intake	N	Admit age									Total
		12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
1994	24	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	41.7%	45.8%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1995	107	0.0%	1.9%	9.3%	26.2%	46.7%	15.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1996	111	0.0%	2.7%	18.0%	23.4%	35.1%	18.9%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1997	108	0.0%	0.9%	13.0%	29.6%	40.7%	13.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1998	89	0.0%	4.5%	12.4%	27.0%	32.6%	23.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1999	86	0.0%	1.2%	7.0%	23.3%	36.0%	31.4%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2000	99	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	26.3%	39.4%	22.2%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2001	78	1.3%	0.0%	3.8%	19.2%	35.9%	35.9%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2002	65	0.0%	1.5%	7.7%	24.6%	47.7%	13.8%	3.1%	0.0%	1.5%	100.0%
2003	59	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	20.3%	54.2%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2004	67	0.0%	0.0%	14.9%	17.9%	40.3%	25.4%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2005	54	0.0%	3.7%	5.6%	20.4%	38.9%	31.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2006	58	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	17.2%	37.9%	41.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2007	60	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	18.3%	36.7%	31.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2008	59	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%	27.1%	33.9%	30.5%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2009	61	0.0%	1.6%	4.9%	13.1%	45.9%	32.8%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2010	84	0.0%	2.4%	4.8%	11.9%	26.2%	35.7%	16.7%	2.4%	0.0%	100.0%
2011	68	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	10.3%	19.1%	29.4%	22.1%	16.2%	1.5%	100.0%
2012	77	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	14.3%	31.2%	33.8%	16.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	**1414**	**0.1%**	**1.3%**	**7.7%**	**21.0%**	**36.8%**	**25.7%**	**5.4%**	**1.8%**	**0.1%**	**100.0%**

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis. The darker the color, the greater the proportion of individuals in the cell.

The racial and ethnic composition of the population has remained relatively stable over time, as shown in Figure 3.2. Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic group followed by African Americans and Whites.

Figure 3.2. **Race and ethnicity of YOS population at intake, 1994-2012**



Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

Gang membership among YOS intakes has varied somewhat over the years, as shown in Table 3.3. The proportion of the incoming population with strong gang affiliations has ranged from a low of 7% (FY 1999) to a high of about 27% in FY 2008 and 28% in FY 1995. Approximately one in six of the FY 2012 intakes had a gang affiliation.

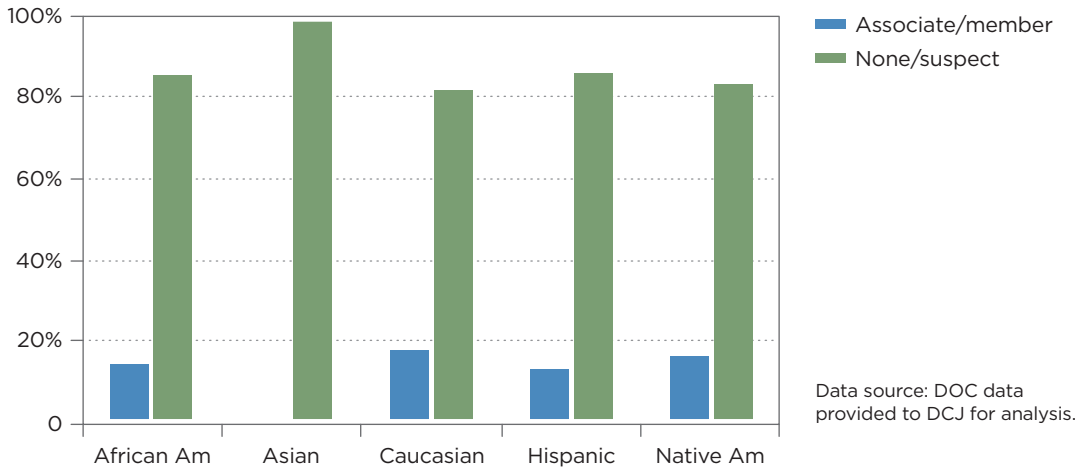
Table 3.3. **Gang membership of YOS intakes, 1994-2012**

FY intake	N	None/suspect	Associate/member	Total
1994	24	79.2%	20.8%	100.0%
1995	107	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
1996	111	79.3%	20.7%	100.0%
1997	108	78.7%	21.3%	100.0%
1998	89	84.3%	15.7%	100.0%
1999	86	93.0%	7.0%	100.0%
2000	99	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
2001	78	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
2002	65	78.5%	21.5%	100.0%
2003	59	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%
2004	67	79.1%	20.9%	100.0%
2005	54	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
2006	58	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
2007	60	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
2008	59	72.9%	27.1%	100.0%
2009	61	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%
2010	84	86.9%	13.1%	100.0%
2011	68	86.8%	13.2%	100.0%
2012	77	83.1%	16.9%	100.0%
Total	**1414**	**82.7%**	**17.3%**	**100.0%**

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

Figure 3.3 shows gang membership by ethnicity for YOS admissions for the current population. No Asian offenders had a gang affiliation whereas Whites had the largest proportion of gang affiliates (18.2%); 14.6% of the Black offenders and 13.9% of Hispanics had a gang affiliation upon entry to YOS.

Figure 3.3. Gang membership by ethnicity, FY 1994 - FY 2012 admissions (n=1414)



In terms of the risk and need levels of the population, YOS used the Colorado Youthful Offender Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI) to identify areas of need. The CYO-LSI is an 84-question semi-structured assessment measuring risk and protective factors in the areas of criminal history, substance abuse, education/employment, family, peer relationships, accommodation, and miscellaneous issues. Table 3.4 shows the proportion of the YOS population that has been identified with risks/needs in the CYO-LSI domains. In general, these proportions have remained fairly stable since 2005. Nearly half of the incoming YOS population has a serious offending history; two-thirds have serious substance abuse problems, half to two-thirds have education/employment problems and approximately 40% have family problems. Approximately two-thirds of the intake population over these years scored high risk in the category of peer relationships. This is not a surprising finding, given the importance of peer relationships for the adolescent and young adult populations. This finding underscores the importance of promoting a pro-social environment in the YOS.

Nearly half of the incoming YOS population has a serious offending history; two-thirds have serious substance abuse problems, half to two-thirds have education/employment problems and approximately 40% have family problems.

Table 3.4. The proportion (%) of the YOS population with high needs on the CYO-LSI, 2005-2012

FY	N	Risk factors			Protective factors				Total score
		Criminal history	Substance abuse	Educ/ employ	Family	Peer	Accomm	Misc	
2005	54	49.6	56.5	48.9	46.2	70.6	38.1	37.7	**42.7**
2006	59	37.1	60.3	57.5	40.5	64.7	33.3	30.1	**41.4**
2007	58	41.9	62.3	62.2	41.5	65.5	28.1	32.9	**41.0**
2008	61	37.1	62.8	61.3	42.2	63.5	27.0	35.7	**40.3**
2009	60	40.5	70.2	65.4	41.5	68.6	28.8	32.2	**42.1**
2010	83	40.4	64.2	59.9	34.3	62.7	19.6	28.9	**38.5**
2011	69	47.6	66.2	57.6	43.0	62.9	24.6	33.5	**41.6**
2012	29	35.7	54.5	56.0	37.9	55.6	18.1	33.6	**36.4**
Total	**473**	**41.5**	**62.8**	**59.0**	**40.7**	**64.6**	**27.2**	**32.8**	**40.6**

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis.

Table 3.5 shows the most serious conviction charge of the YOS intake population since 1994. Aggravated robbery, robbery, aggravated assault, and assault are the most common conviction offenses. Figure 3.4 shows the level of the felony class for the most serious conviction crime; Felony 3s and Felony 4s are the most common. The use of YOS for offenders with Felony 5s as the most serious conviction crime has declined significantly since 2004.

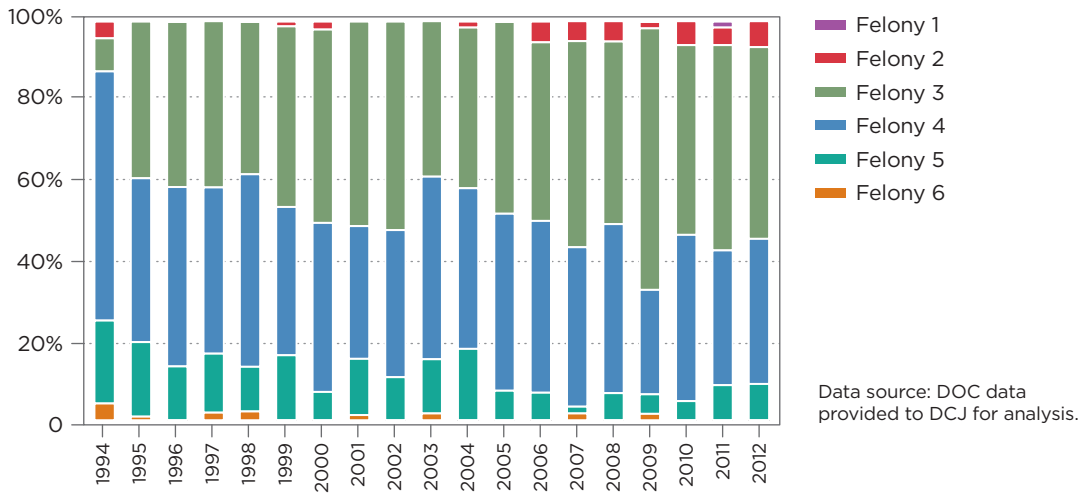
Aggravated robbery, robbery, aggravated assault, and assault are the most common conviction offenses.

Table 3.5. **Most serious conviction charge over time, 1994-2012**

Crime	FY intake																			Total
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Accessory to a crime	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Arson	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	30.8%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	30.8%	7.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Assault	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Assault 1st	0.0%	11.9%	8.9%	7.4%	4.5%	7.9%	7.4%	3.5%	4.5%	2.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	5.9%	3.5%	6.4%	6.4%	3.5%	4.5%	100.0%
Assault 2nd	4.5%	7.9%	7.9%	6.0%	4.1%	3.8%	4.9%	2.6%	6.0%	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%	2.6%	4.9%	7.5%	4.9%	8.3%	4.5%	5.3%	100.0%
Burglary	0.0%	4.2%	10.5%	7.4%	7.4%	3.2%	16.8%	6.3%	0.0%	4.2%	4.2%	2.1%	1.1%	5.3%	8.4%	4.2%	1.1%	3.2%	10.5%	100.0%
Controlled substance	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	5.6%	11.1%	0.0%	5.6%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	100.0%
Court and corrections	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
Criminal attempt	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Escape	0.0%	9.8%	9.8%	7.3%	4.9%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	9.8%	4.9%	7.3%	9.8%	4.9%	2.4%	0.0%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%	7.3%	100.0%
Ethnic intimidation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	100.0%
Haras stalking with restraining order	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	100.0%
Kidnapping	4.5%	22.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Menacing	4.2%	9.9%	11.3%	12.7%	8.5%	7.0%	2.8%	12.7%	4.2%	4.2%	5.6%	2.8%	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%	2.8%	7.0%	100.0%
Motor vehicle theft	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	19.2%	3.8%	7.7%	3.8%	11.5%	15.4%	0.0%	11.5%	11.5%	3.8%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Murder	1.3%	5.3%	5.3%	4.0%	5.3%	10.7%	13.3%	4.0%	0.0%	4.0%	1.3%	1.3%	5.3%	5.3%	8.0%	4.0%	12.0%	4.0%	5.3%	100.0%
Offenses relating to custody	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Other homicide	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	100.0%
Other related homicide	0.0%	9.1%	2.3%	15.9%	13.6%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	9.1%	6.8%	6.8%	0.0%	9.1%	4.5%	4.5%	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Public peace	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Robb agg	0.9%	5.0%	7.9%	7.9%	6.4%	5.2%	6.1%	7.3%	5.5%	2.3%	4.1%	4.4%	5.0%	3.8%	2.9%	5.0%	6.4%	7.3%	6.7%	100.0%
Robbery	2.6%	6.4%	9.0%	10.3%	10.3%	5.1%	9.0%	9.0%	5.1%	6.4%	3.8%	2.6%	5.1%	2.6%	1.3%	3.8%	3.8%	1.3%	2.6%	100.0%
Sexual assault	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	14.3%	100.0%
Theft	0.0%	18.5%	0.0%	7.4%	7.4%	14.8%	11.1%	18.5%	0.0%	7.4%	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%	100.0%
Vandalism	0.0%	4.5%	13.6%	4.5%	13.6%	18.2%	4.5%	9.1%	4.5%	0.0%	13.6%	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Weapons	6.7%	10.0%	10.0%	6.7%	3.3%	23.3%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	6.7%	10.0%	6.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Wrongs to children	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	**100.0%**

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis. The darker the color, the greater the proportion of individuals in the cell.

Figure 3.4. **Felony class of most serious conviction crime for YOS intakes, 1994-2012**



3. Are YOS offenders more serious than those sentenced to the Division of Youth Corrections (in the juvenile justice system) and less serious than those sentenced to prison? (That is, is the YOS population unique?)

YOS appears to be a unique population, based on analyses of index crime and prior history of those sentenced to YOS, DOC and the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC). YOS offenders are much more likely to be convicted of a violent or sex crime compared with similarly aged DOC and DYC, about equally likely as DOC and DYC admissions to have a prior violent or sex crime conviction, and generally less likely than DOC and DYC admissions to have *any* conviction history.

Conviction for violent or sex crime. An analysis of all individuals 17 years of age or less sentenced between 2005 and 2011 to DOC, DYC, and YOS, shows that those sentenced to YOS were much more likely to have a violent/sex conviction crime compared to the other placements (see Table 3.6): 86% of YOS offenders were convicted of a violent/sex offense compared to 28.3% of those sentenced to DYC and 71% of those sentenced to DOC. A similar analysis of all individuals 18 and 19 years old also shows a much greater proportion of the YOS sentences (70.8%) with a violent/sex crime conviction compared to 11.1% of those sentenced to DYC and 37.1% of those sentenced to DOC (see Table 3.7). Note that the statute that made 18 and 19 year olds eligible for a YOS sentence only applied to those convicted of violent crimes.

YOS appears to be a unique population, based on analyses of index crime and prior history of those sentenced to YOS, DOC and the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC).

Table 3.6. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Index crime is violent or sex offense*

Sentence	N	No Violent/ sex crime conviction	Yes Violent/ sex crime conviction	Total
Dept of Corrections	131	29.0%	71.0%	100.0%
Division of Youth Corrections	1874	71.7%	28.3%	100.0%
Youthful Offender System	344	14.0%	86.0%	100.0%
Total	**2349**	**60.9%**	**39.1%**	**100.0%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

*Crimes included are Murder, Other Homicide, Felony Assault, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Assault, Other Sex Crimes, and Weapons.

Table 3.7. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Index crime is violent or sex offense*

Sentence	N	No Violent/ sex crime conviction	Yes Violent/ sex crime conviction	Total
Dept of Corrections	1569	62.9%	37.1%	100.0%
Division of Youth Corrections	9	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
Youthful Offender System	96	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%
Total	**1674**	**61.1%**	**38.9%**	**100.0%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

*Crimes included are Murder, Other Homicide, Felony Assault, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Assault, Other Sex Crimes, and Weapons.

Prior violent or sex crime conviction. In terms of prior convictions for violent/sex crimes, a comparison of the same cases aged 17 or less shows very similar conviction histories across the three placements, with a slightly higher proportion of DOC sentences with a violent/sex history (16.8% of DOC intakes compared to 14.9% for DYC and 16.3% for YOS; see Table 3.8). However, for those aged 18 and 19, the proportion with a violent/sex conviction history of those sentenced to YOS (22.9%) and DOC (25.8%) far exceeded the 11.1% of DYC admissions (Table 3.9).

Table 3.8. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Prior convictions for violent or sex offense*

Sentence	N	No prior violent/ sex crime conviction	Yes prior violent/ sex crime conviction	Total
Dept of Corrections	131	83.2%	16.8%	100.0%
Division of Youth Corrections	1874	85.1%	14.9%	100.0%
Youthful Offender System	344	83.7%	16.3%	100.0%
Total	**2349**	**84.8%**	**15.2%**	**100.0%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

*Crimes included are Murder, Other Homicide, Felony Assault, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Assault, Other Sex Crimes, and Weapons.

Table 3.9. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Prior convictions for violent or sex offense*

Sentence	N	No prior violent/ sex crime conviction	Yes prior violent/ sex crime conviction	Total
Dept of Corrections	1570	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
Division of Youth Corrections	9	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
Youthful Offender System	96	77.1%	22.9%	100.0%
Total	**1675**	**74.4%**	**25.6%**	**100.0%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

*Crimes included are Murder, Other Homicide, Felony Assault, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Assault, Other Sex Crimes, and Weapons.

Any conviction history. Both violent and nonviolent conviction histories are presented in Tables 3.10 and 3.11. Considerably fewer YOS admissions, ages 17 or younger, had prior convictions (57%) compared to three-fourths (74.7%) of the DYC intakes and 64.1% of those sentenced to DOC. Among 18 and 19 year olds sentenced between 2005 and 2011, the proportion of DYC and YOS with prior convictions was similar, 66.7% and 69.8%, respectively, while one-fourth (76.1%) of DOC admissions had prior convictions.

Table 3.10. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 10-17, Proportion with prior conviction histories

Sentence	N	No prior convictions	Yes prior convictions
Dept of Corrections	131	35.9%	64.1%
Division of Youth Corrections	1874	25.3%	74.7%
Youthful Offender System	344	43.0%	57.0%
Total	**2349**	**28.5%**	**71.5%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

Table 3.11. Cases filed CY 2005-2011, Ages 18-19, Proportion with prior conviction histories

Sentence	N	No prior convictions	Yes prior convictions
Dept of Corrections	1570	23.9%	76.1%
Division of Youth Corrections	9	33.3%	66.7%
Youthful Offender System	96	30.2%	69.8%
Total	**1675**	**24.4%**	**75.6%**

Data source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

In sum, YOS admissions between 2005 and 2011 were more likely than DOC or DYC to have a violent/sex index offense (this was especially the case for 18-19 year olds), were almost equally as likely as DOC admissions to have a prior violent/sex conviction history (18-19 year olds sentenced to YOS were similar to DOC admissions), and somewhat less likely than DOC to have a felony conviction history (18-19 year olds were less likely than DOC to have a conviction history, and slightly more likely than DYC placements to have a conviction history).

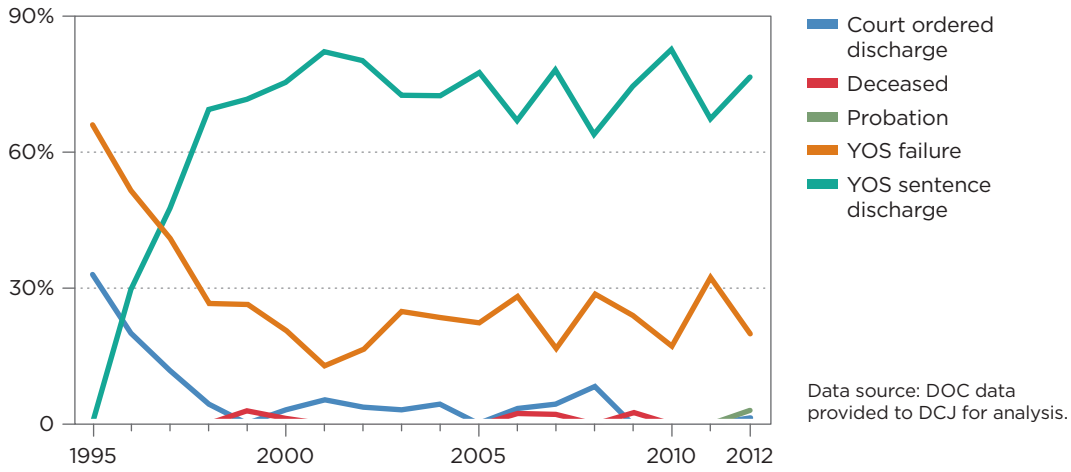
4. What is the program completion rate, by phase, of YOS participants? What is the new filing rate of individuals released from YOS since 1995?

What is the program completion rate of YOS participants? The majority of YOS participants have successfully discharged their sentence since 1998, according to the data presented in Figure 3.5. In recent years, approximately 70% to 80% of YOS offenders have

In recent years, approximately 70% to 80% of YOS offenders have successfully discharged their sentence. This is a high completion rate given the high-risk nature of the YOS population.

successfully discharged their sentence. This is a high completion rate given the high-risk nature of the YOS population. Through FY 2012, a few individuals have been released to probation, some were discharged by court order, and five individuals died while in YOS custody,[91] as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5. YOS Termination Types, FY 1995-2012 (N=1150)



What is the new filing rate of individuals released from YOS since 1995? Of 733 individuals who successfully discharged from the Youthful Offender System between 1996 and June 2010 with at least two years of time at risk in the community, 46% received a new felony or misdemeanor filing within two years; about half (25.4%)of these were convicted of a new felony crime (see Table 3.12). Of these, 11.1% were convicted of a violent felony crime.

Table 3.12. 2-Year Post-Release Recidivism (n=733)

	Any new filing		New felony conviction		New violent felony conviction	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
No	396	54.0%	547	74.6%	652	88.9%
Yes	337	46.0%	186	25.4%	81	11.1%
Total	**733**	**100.0%**	**733**	**100.0%**	**733**	**100.0%**

Source: Court records were extracted from Judicial Branch's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) information management system via the Colorado Justice Analytics Support System (CJASS) and analyzed by DCJ/ORS.

[91] In 1999, an inmate appeared to faint during IDO and was pronounced dead at the hospital; in 1999, an inmate died of complications from an attempted suicide; in 1999, a YOS escapee died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after altercation with the police; in 2005 a fugitive warrant was issued for a YOS offender who was killed by a SWAT team; in 2006 an inmate died by hanging at the YOS facility. Note that in the fall of 2012, as this report was going to press, two residents died by suicide.

These 733 individuals were at risk in the community for at least two years and up to 16 years after discharge from YOS, just over a third (34.9%) eventually received a sentence to the Department of Corrections for a new conviction. One individual received a sentence to the Division of Youth Corrections. The return-to-prison rates reported in the FY 2011 *YOS Annual Report* issued by the Department of Corrections are 21% within 3 years and 30% within 5 years.[92] Almost one-third (31%) of *all* YOS releases through FY 2012 (n=832) returned to prison for a new felony within up to 16 years after release from YOS, and the majority of new crimes committed by this population that warranted a prison sentence occurred within the first 5 years of release, as reported in the YOS FY 2011 *Annual Report*. This finding is encouraging given the very serious risk level of those sentenced to YOS.

Almost one-third (31%) of all YOS releases through FY 2012 (n=832) returned to prison for a new felony within up to 16 years after release from YOS, and the majority of new crimes committed by this population that warranted a prison sentence occurred within the first 5 years of release, as reported in the YOS FY 2011 Annual Report. This finding is encouraging given the very serious risk level of those sentenced to YOS.

Additional Findings

Strong Staff and Administration

Most staff expressed extremely positive perceptions toward the YOS leadership team. In particular, the facility warden, Steven Hager, is credited with giving a clear vision of his expectations of YOS staff. Further, the YOS administration was viewed almost unanimously by staff study participants as being open to new ideas and supportive of staff efforts. Prior to Mr. Hager becoming warden in 2006, YOS had three different wardens over a five year period, leading to difficulty in the expression and implementation of a clear direction and set of values. Today, the YOS written guiding principles are steeped in the language of the enabling statute.[93] The YOS management team, including the warden, provides direct training to staff about the YOS philosophy and expectations of staff, a fact that was noted during several staff focus groups. As noted earlier, nearly every staff member who participated in the survey said they considered themselves role models and mentors to the residents. More than 4 out of 5 (86%) of staff survey respondents reported that there is a consistent or somewhat consistent philosophy between facility administrators and line staff who work directly with residents (see Figure 3.6).

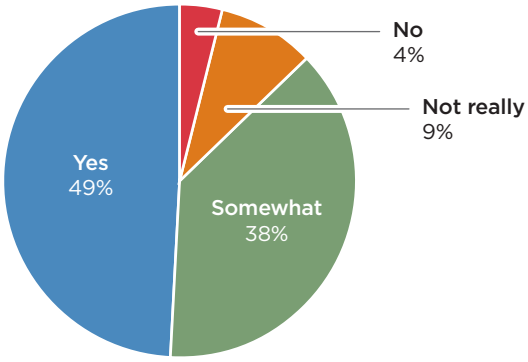
Most staff expressed extremely positive perceptions toward the YOS leadership team. In particular, the facility warden, Steven Hager, is credited with giving a clear vision of his expectations of YOS staff.

---

[92] *Youthful Offender System Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning and Analysis. http://www.doc.state.co.us/sites/default/files/opa/YOS_FY11.pdf

[93] *Youthful Offender System Employee Handbook, 2011-2012*; *YOS Drill Instructor Manual* (March 2012); DOC Administrative Regulation 1600-01; *YOS Offender Reception and Orientation Manual* (January 2012).

Figure 3.6. Do you think there is a consistent philosophy between facility administrators and line staff (staff survey)? (n=125)



Staff made the following comments about the YOS administration during focus groups and in written survey responses:

> *The consistency and stable leadership has been a godsend for the facility.*
>
> *By and large the Department is making a shift towards pro-social development of offenders. However, YOS remains at the forefront of offender management geared towards pro-social development with opportunities for offenders to learn and grow....Administration communicates the intent, spirit, and design [of YOS] clearly and effectively.*
>
> *I know from past experience that the administrators here support you 100% as long as you are doing what you are suppose to be doing....We have total support from our administration down to our line staff.*
>
> *One of the best things about YOS is the willingness of administration to accept new ideas.*
>
> *A culture has been created from administration that we've bought into. We believe in our jobs and that we're here to make a difference.*
>
> *It's fulfilling work. These guys are going to go out on the street and the recidivism rate is so much better for offenders coming out of this facility that you feel like you're accomplishing something.*
>
> *Everyone's role here is the same; to positively affect these guys so they're better once they get out. That's the role from the warden, to a case manager, to a teacher, to a security officer. We all have the same goal.*

The warden interviews potential hires to ensure that they *want* to work at YOS, that is, that they are interested in working more collaboratively with offenders to arrive at desired

outcomes. This was not always the case. At the time of the last DCJ evaluation of YOS, many staff had transferred to YOS primarily because they wanted to work closer to home, not because they wanted to work with the YOS population. Because the YOS is very different from a traditional prison setting,[94] transferring staff to work at YOS based on seniority alone created problems for staff morale and performance, as noted in our 2004 report. Today, the staff, collectively, appears to be much more aligned with the YOS environment and philosophy.[95] As staff members stated during a focus group:

> *At [an adult facility], the first thing you think about is getting out at the end of the day. When you get here it takes about 6 or 7 months to let go of the security patterns in your head and start to focus on the person in front of you..... If you truly buy in to what the program is offering you'll succeed.*
>
> *An adult facility is a warehouse; nobody has any incentive to better themselves there. It's nicer to be here and be part of something where they have a chance to succeed.*
>
> *At the adult facility, if there's a fight, we don't ask 'what happened.' Here, we talk to them after a fight, 'why did this happen, what's going on, let's work on your behavior.'*

Because the YOS is very different from a traditional prison setting, transferring staff to work at YOS based on seniority alone created problems for staff morale and performance, as noted in our 2004 report. Today, the staff, collectively, appears to be much more aligned with the YOS environment and philosophy.

Participants in an offender focus group said this about staff:

> *Besides their lack of consistency, they pretty much look out after our best interest. One staff brings flowers, raspberry bushes for the garden. They're really nice. The female unit staff is awesome. You can talk to a staff member at anytime, they're perceptive. The staff knows when you're being a pain or when you're going through stuff. You can work anything out with staff.*
>
> *[One staff member] comes in on his off days. He comes in and does mock interviews with us on his off days to practice being in the outside world.*

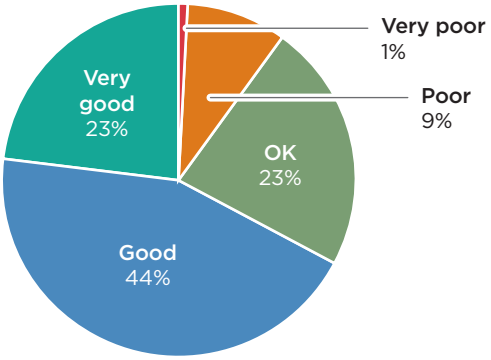
The strong staff and administration and consistent message of the YOS vision may be linked to the perception of positive morale among YOS staff respondents. As reflected in Figure 3.7, over one-fifth (23%) of survey respondents reported Very Good morale; another 44% reported Good morale, and 23% said morale was Ok. Only 10% reported Poor or Very Poor morale, and these responses came primarily from units that had vacant positions that had not been filled and so respondents felt that they were short-staffed.

---

[94] One of the YOS residents who was reconsidered and resentenced to YOS noted: *99% of the people here think this is real prison, they have no clue*. Another said: *When you're there, you know the rules, you don't cross those, you're in survival mode. Here there are no unspoken rules*.

[95] YOS-specific training has also contributed to this improvement, as discussed below.

Figure 3.7. **YOS staff perceptions of morale (staff survey) (n=126)**



Despite these positive findings, it should be noted that 40% of offender survey respondents complained about "some staff." Whites and Blacks were more likely to criticize staff compared to Hispanics. Some of these respondents mentioned that gang violence and intimidation remained a problem. One survey respondent said that the worst thing about YOS was "staff turning a blind eye." One survey respondent recommended the following as something that would improve YOS: "*revocate anyone who engages in gang activity and have more staff out during yard and movement*." One offender complained about some staff while expressing a desire for more interaction:

> *...some staff – not all, but some – like to act as if I will never accomplish anything just because I'm a felon, or they just treat us like dirt most of the time.... [I suggest] they get more staff to be active in our lives more.*

Lack of Physical Space and Activities

Data from surveys, focus groups, and interviews consistently indicated a lack of sufficient space for offenders and activities. This was among the most consistent findings from the study.

Data from surveys, focus groups, and interviews consistently indicated a lack of sufficient space for offenders and activities. This was among the most consistent findings from the study. The current facility has a capacity of 256 for Phase I and II offenders.[96] Building 8 houses the Phase I residents, which are the majority of residents on campus. The building is divided into four pods for the men, with up to 56 offenders in each pod,[97] and up to 8 in a room. There is one common area called the day hall which cannot hold all the residents at one time. Going outside to the yard requires staff supervision which is not always available, and being outside in the heat of summer[98] or inclement winter weather is sometimes impractical, and is frequently not an option. One staff interviewee put it this way:

---

[96] The Orientation Training Phase (OTP) occurs at the nearby LaVista Correctional Facility. The women and Phase II men are in a separate building on the same grounds as Building 8.

[97] At the prior YOS facility, there were 12 offenders per pod.

[98] It is not uncommon for temperatures to be above 100 degrees in the summer in Pueblo.

They're packed in there; 200 well adjusted adolescents would have trouble in there....Last weekend there were 50 guys fighting for space in the day hall area.

The lack of adequate space also interferes with programming. Many of the cognitive behavioral strategies involve working together in small groups to solve personal problems (Quick Skills and GGI), and weekly one-on-ones with individual advisors. An offender survey respondent said there is no privacy during the group meetings and one-on-ones, reflecting the crowded conditions.

Concerns about space limitations were anticipated before YOS moved to the current location in 2006. According to DCJ's 2004 evaluation of YOS, concerns about space at the new facility were among the most frequently reported comments. The evaluation report cited concerns about limited space for "...classrooms, vocational programs, the dining hall, recreation, and the library."[99] During the current evaluation, staff and offenders consistently mentioned the need for additional space in the areas identified in the 2004 study, with the only exception being the dining hall.

The extent to which the lack of physical space actually is linked to a lack of activities for the residents is unknown. However, both lack of space and lack of activities were consistently mentioned in staff and resident focus groups, surveys and interviews. Many offenders asked that the library (and the library hours) be expanded, with more and newer books. Both offenders and staff reported a need for more vocational training, more job experiences, and advanced educational classes. In an open-ended question[100] on the resident survey about suggestions for improvements at YOS, one-quarter (26.3%) of the respondents recommended more college classes.

Both offenders and staff reported a need for more vocational training, more job experiences, and advanced educational classes.

The need for more activities, especially on the weekends, was also a consistent theme. Yet a staff survey respondent observed:

We don't have the buildings to offer more vocational and educational services because we don't have the space.

By way of contrast, Phase II male residents (which usually number between 10 and 15) are housed in a separate building that lends itself to improved programming. One staff interviewee explained: "You can break these guys into very small groups and work with them intensively. And this is all due to the physical set-up."

One Phase III focus group participant, when asked to comment on his time in the Pueblo facility, said:

---

[99] Rosky, J., Pasini-Hill, D., Lowden, K., Harrison, L. & English, K. (2004). *Evaluation of the Youthful Offender System (YOS) in Colorado*. Denver, CO: Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Public Safety. Page 48. Available at http://www.dcj.state.co.us/ors/pdf/docs/YOS_REPORT_2004.pdf.

[100] An open-ended question is one where the respondent must write out the response because no categorical responses are offered.

Phase I is just straight time, you get your GED then warehouse yourself until Phase II.

Phase I focus group participants and a Phase I survey respondent put it this way:

There are only a select few college classes, and they pick who will get to participate based on time left. If you're not leaving soon you just sit around.

There's nothing for you to do from 3:50 – 9pm.

I've taken everything so I don't do anything all day. ...I go to rec in the morning and then just sit around and do nothing.

More job opportunities would be good. Not a lot to do around here.

If you have days off, you can't watch TV, can't sleep. You have all the rest of the day, even when you do work, with nothing to do.

Despite significant efforts by the recreation staff to develop activities, including clearing the yard to make space for weights, basketball, flag football, volleyball, and a running club, the lack of activities still appeared to be a chronic problem. The facility does not have a gymnasium, and a consistent theme from both staff and residents was the need for a gym to keep the offenders busy and to burn off energy, especially during times of inclement weather. One staff member stated in the survey: "*Keep them busy and they have less time to fight you at the end of the day*." The lack of a gym prompted one staff focus group participant to report: "*In the winter there's no recreation whatsoever*."

YOS administrators are mindful of the need for more activities for offenders. At a minimum, these activities are key to the safe management of the offender population. Additionally, the warden's perception is that offenders need to stay occupied while in YOS but they also need to develop hobbies that they can use to manage their leisure time after release into the community. Referring to criminology literature, which finds a lack of leisure time activities to be one of the top criminogenic needs among offenders, the warden stated his commitment to finding activities that can translate into positive leisure time activities upon release. To that end, in the last year, officials at YOS have purchased musical instruments and started guitar instruction on the fundamentals of string instruments. Additionally, as part of the Graphic Design class, YOS recently began a quarterly newsletter written and published by YOS residents. YOS is coordinating with DOC's Correctional Industries to engage offenders in bead work, painting ceramics, and tying flies for fishing. All products will be sold out of the Correctional Industry store. Since one of the YOS staff is a master plumber, discussions are underway to offer a basic plumbing class to build offenders' life skills such as how to fix a plugged toilet.

The facility does not have a gymnasium, and a consistent theme from both staff and residents was the need for a gym to keep the offenders busy and to burn off energy, especially during times of inclement weather.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) owns an empty building on the YOS grounds called Building 20. Early plans for the current YOS facility included the acquisition of Building 20 when it became available, however it would require approximately $1M to retrofit the building for YOS use. This has not yet occurred despite the facts that YOS has adequate staff and operating funds to open the building, and acquiring the building offers significant advantages. It would allow for IDO to be moved from the LaVista facility to the YOS grounds, better aligning IDO with the YOS mission and goals. Building 20 has a small gym that would be extremely valuable to YOS, and a food preparation area that could be used for small groups of offenders including those in IDO, the YOS women and Phase II offenders.[101] When asked what improvements they would make at YOS, a few comments from staff focus groups reflect the value of Building 20.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) owns an empty building on the YOS grounds called Building 20. Early plans for the current YOS facility included the acquisition of Building 20 when it became available.

> *We need building 20; we need to incorporate the orientation training phase on this campus. It would make so much more sense to have everything here at one campus.*
>
> *Building 20 and recreation space are the main issues.*
>
> *[We need] more recreational areas and an indoor gym. The gym is not for fun, it's a management tool.*

It should be noted however that data from an interview with one staff raised some advantages to the current facility. All Phase I offenders are housed in the same building, and one administrator commented that "*having one primary living unit has led to greater consistency. Staff are more engaged and more team oriented*." According to one interviewee, this advantage may have led to reductions in the tension between security and programming among staff, an issue discussed below in "Philosophical Tension." Nevertheless, the lack of space and activities was among the most consistent findings of the current study.

Safety

It is unclear whether the crowded conditions affect the safety of the facility. Some staff perceived that the crowded conditions led to a greater number of fights among residents. COPD (Code of Penal Discipline) violations reflect misconduct and can be used to better understand the level of misbehavior of individuals at YOS. An analysis of COPD violations over time found that the proportion of offenders with a COPD violation, while increasing over the time YOS has operated, remained relatively stable in 2005, 2006, and 2007 (the YOS moved to its current, more crowded facility in 2006), as shown in Figure 3.8.[102] Overall, the trend is an increase over time in the proportion of YOS residents who had a

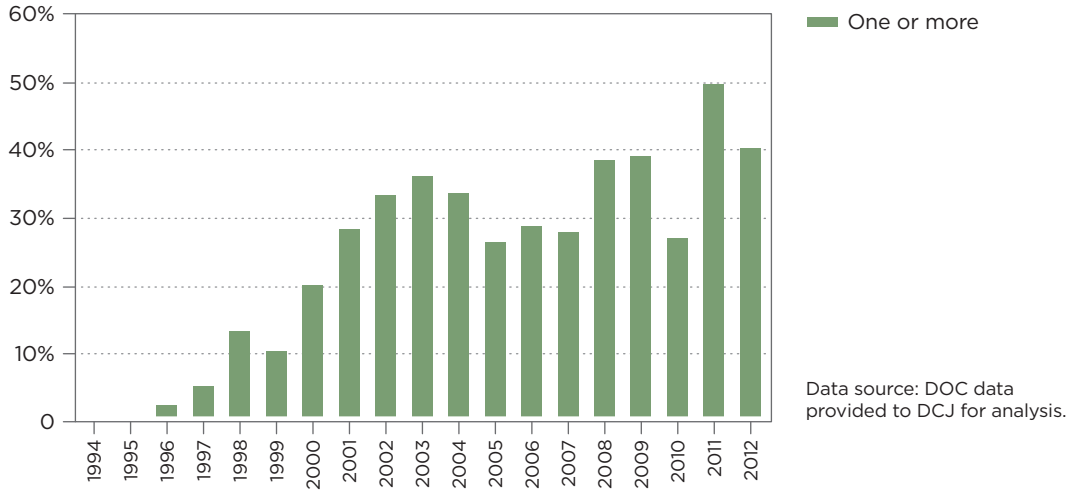
---

[101] Currently food for all meals is prepared at the LaVista Correctional Facility and transported to the YOS facility three times each day.

[102] Data provided by DOC to DCJ for analysis.

COPD violation, with a significant uptick in 2011. This uptick reflects incidents over a single weekend that revolved around a New Year's Eve episode which resulted in the revocation of 14 offenders who are now serving their DOC sentence.

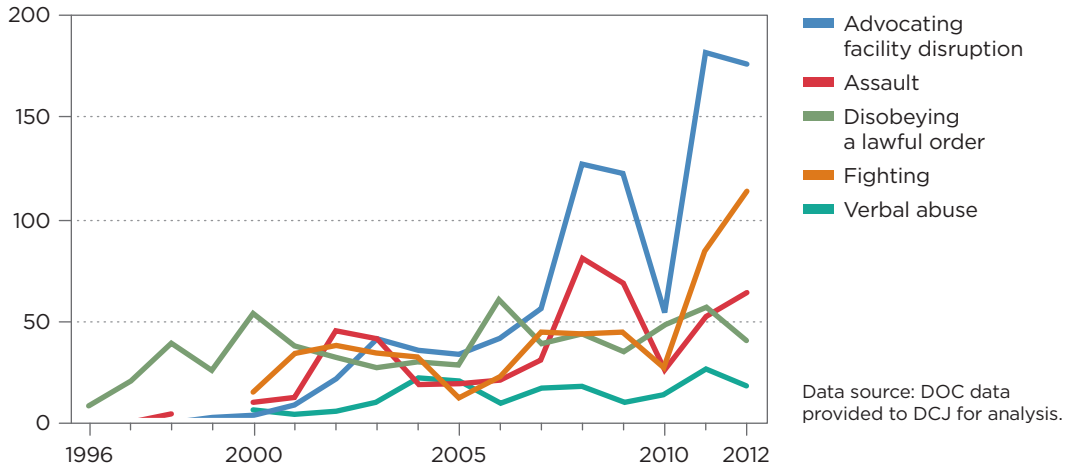
Figure 3.8. Proportion of YOS offenders with a COPD violation, 1994-2012[103]



However, looking more closely at the five most frequent COPD violations, as shown in Figure 3.9, it appears that there has been an increase over time in advocating facility disruption, assaults, and fighting. The increases indeed seem to have occurred after the population was transferred to the current, smaller facility. It appears that the movement to a smaller facility in 2006 may have led an increase in misconduct among the YOS population.

[103] In the analyses for Figures 3.5 and 3.6 the YOS population is derived by determining which fiscal years the offender was present in YOS using the offender's intake and release date. Offenders are counted in a fiscal year if they spent any days in YOS in that year.

Figure 3.9. **Top Five COPD violations, 1994-2012 (n=2735 violations)**

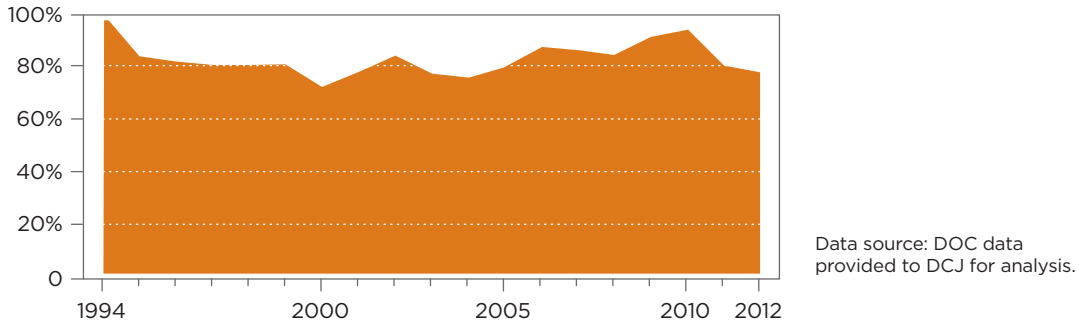


Despite the increases in COPD violations, most staff, especially those who have worked in other prison settings, believed the YOS environment was safe, especially considering that YOS houses a dangerous population. Figure 3.10 shows that, since YOS opened, approximately 80% of the incoming YOS population was serving time for a violent crime.[104]

Concerns were voiced in surveys, focus groups and interviews about areas that had little or no line-of-sight supervision. In particular, stairwells and one area in the yard were mentioned as places where fights occurred. Cameras were installed in these areas while the study was underway. Importantly, there was no indication in any of the study data of assaultive behavior by staff; instead some staff and offenders voiced concern about the assaultive nature of some members of the offender population.

Despite the increases in COPD violations, most staff, especially those who have worked in other prison settings, believed the YOS environment was safe.

Figure 3.10. **Proportion of the YOS population serving time for a violent crime**



[104] The most common conviction crimes for the YOS population are assault, aggravated assault, robbery and aggravated robbery, as shown in Table 3.5.

Both staff and offenders mentioned offender-on-offender assaults in particular. One staff recommended greater supervision during yard and movement as a preventive strategy. In response to questions about safety, one staff member said the following:

> *Gangs occupy the yard, and they can sneak into each other's rooms. As long as there's no serious bodily injury they can get away with it.*

Nevertheless, one question in the resident survey asked "Do you feel safe at YOS?" Eighty percent (80%) of the resident survey respondents reported that they felt safe or somewhat safe at YOS (see Figure 3.11). The survey asked the reasons for the answer selected. The majority of those who answered "no" to the question about safety reported that they felt unsafe because of the other offenders while 12% stated that the staff made them feel unsafe[105] (but see next paragraph). In answer to the sub-question "What makes you feel unsafe at YOS," three survey respondents stated:

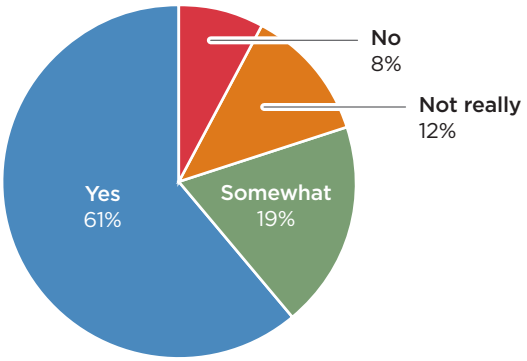
Eighty percent (80%) of the resident survey respondents reported that they felt safe or somewhat safe at YOS.

> *The other offenders who bully, threaten, verbally abuse, harass, and otherwise pose a significant threat to my safety.*

> *Other offenders that don't know how to do their own time and always want to mess with people.*

> *I don't know how to fight.*

Figure 3.11. Do you feel safe at YOS (offender survey)?



In answer to the open-ended question "What makes you feel safe", 43% of resident survey respondents wrote "staff," and another 28% said "some staff." Fourteen percent said "friends" made them feel safe. Seven respondents said the structure of YOS made them feel safe.

[105] Likewise, in answer to a question, "What suggestions do you have for improving YOS," 13% (all men) said "better staff."

Finally, offenders whose DOC sentences were reconsidered and were resentenced to YOS had the following things to say about safety at YOS compared to other DOC facilities:

> *The biggest difference is that it's not as violent here....There's fighting here but it's nothing. Over there you've got to be on your toes and be ready, especially being young.*
>
> *Over there it's an everyday mentality, you're on edge, on your toes all day.*
>
> *In adult prison you ask someone how much time they have and they'll cut you up.*

Staff consistently stated that they felt the facility was generally safe, but that the crowded conditions in the current facility has led to more fighting, and that seems to be substantiated by the analysis of the top reasons for COPD violations.

In sum, the majority of YOS offenders reported that they felt safe in the facility; many had both compliments and complaints about staff regarding safety issues. Staff consistently stated that they felt the facility was generally safe, but that the crowded conditions in the current facility has led to more fighting, and that seems to be substantiated by the analysis of the top reasons for COPD violations. Both staff and the residents who had experienced time in prison reported that YOS was much safer than a traditional prison environment.

Inconsistency

As mentioned previously, inconsistency across staff was among the most frequently mentioned problem at YOS and so will be summarized briefly again here. In particular, both staff and residents mentioned the inconsistency in the delivery of positive and negative sanctions. Staff noted inconsistency across and within units and shifts, and that this causes confusion for offenders. Offenders frequently noted "*the rules keep changing*" and also that some staff followed the rules while others did not. This inconsistency can directly and immediately affect a resident's status level because staff document positive and negative behavior by offenders (in chronological records, or "chrons"), and these are important determinants of status movement (up or down). Because status is linked to privileges, the perceived inconsistency is critically important to offenders since it affects their daily activities.

Staff survey responses included the following:

> *Hold staff accountable....Expect staff to hold offenders accountable and [administration should] discipline staff that just want to come to work and not confront and enforce the rules.*
>
> *We need to work on consistency, if one [staff] allows swearing and one [staff] doesn't that makes it super tough on the offender because it's hard for them to know what the right rules are.*

There's huge inconsistency among the staff. The laid back type isn't going to say or do anything, and then you get a [staff] who lays down the law. We're not consistent, one person is this way and another person is that way...

Sometimes the inconsistency is linked to the delivery of consequences for negative behavior. However, YOS staff are encouraged by the administration to develop individualized consequences for problematic behavior, and the use of this discretion may be perceived by both staff and offenders as inconsistency across staff members. Therefore, this individualized approach can provide a valuable and meaningful response to misconduct. According to one staff focus group participant:

YOS staff are encouraged by the administration to develop individualized consequences for problematic behavior, and the use of this discretion may be perceived by both staff and offenders as inconsistency across staff members.

We make sure that the consequence ties to the behavior to build a skill. Consequences aren't punishment related. Consequences are related directly to whatever the incident was.

And while inconsistency was the most widely reported problem during the study, the need for and value given to individualization in responses to positive and negative behavior was also widely reported by staff study participants. This dichotomy presents an interesting challenge for administrators and staff. When discussing this finding with researchers, the warden stated he would discuss this issue in management meetings and with supervisors.

More About Education

According to the YOS *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual*, a YOS norm is defined as an expected behavior, and it goes on to state that an important YOS norm is this: "We consider school sacred and promote the value of education." Survey and focus group data suggest that education is a priority. Half of the resident survey respondents said that the best thing about YOS was school, and nearly 30% said the best thing was college. In answer to a survey question, "What suggestions do you have to improve YOS," 26% of the resident survey respondents said "more college classes."

Every offender has an academic advisor that helps them get into the classes that they need to complete for their GED or high school diploma.[106] In FY 2012, 20 GEDs and 41 high school diplomas were awarded, and several offenders were working on Associates degrees during the course of this evaluation.

In FY 2012, 20 GEDs and 41 high school diplomas were awarded, and several offenders were working on Associates degrees during the course of this evaluation.

Table 3.13 shows academic needs of the intake population since 2008. The higher the score the greater the academic need. An analysis of academic need level since 2008 shows approximately 50-60% of

[106] The academic advisor also helps enroll them in college classes.

YOS intakes had a GED or high school diploma (Category 2) upon arrival while another 20-40% were either functionally illiterate or illiterate in English (Category 4 and 5).

Table 3.13. Academic needs* of YOS intakes, 2008-2012

FY	N	Academic need level					Total
		< Lowest need				Highest need >	
		1	2	3	4	5	
2008	52	0.0%	46.2%	5.8%	34.6%	13.5%	100.0%
2009	58	0.0%	60.3%	1.7%	19.0%	19.0%	100.0%
2010	80	1.3%	52.5%	6.3%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
2011	67	0.0%	70.1%	9.0%	13.4%	7.5%	100.0%
2012	72	0.0%	50.0%	12.5%	20.8%	16.7%	100.0%

Data source: DOC data provided to DCJ for analysis. The darker the color, the greater the proportion of individuals in the cell.

* Category 1 means the person has an associate's degree or above; 2 means the individual has a GED or high school diploma; 3 means the person needs a GED; 4 means the individual is functionally illiterate and needs basic adult education; 5 means the individual is illiterate in English.

This variation in need level represents a challenge for YOS. Those with lower academic needs enter YOS with a GED or high school diploma and consequently require more college classes or non-academic activities, while those with higher needs require an intense academic environment at lower academic levels.

Philosophical Tension

In both prior DCJ evaluations of YOS (2002, 2004), researchers found that both staff and residents viewed an overriding tension between what researchers called the "prison versus program" philosophical conflict. Many staff, in particular, believed that YOS security and custody concerns overrode efforts to implement programming. The 2004 evaluation report stated the following:

> *The data...reflected the perspective that, with the exception of education, there is not a cohesive program at YOS and that the programmatic components that exist are colored by an overriding impediment to program implementation: the unresolved and ongoing conflict between the philosophies of custody and treatment. (DCJ 2004 YOS evaluation report: page xi)*

This tension did not surface as a problem in the current evaluation. While it was an overriding concern in past evaluations, it was identified by only a few participants in this study and, when this occurred, it was framed as an issue related to staff inexperience at YOS. Overall, both offenders and staff felt that their mission was clear: to promote the success

While on-site, researchers observed that the focus on security was paramount but it was done in conjunction with a philosophy that prioritized programming.

of residents who would return to the community much sooner than if they had served their original prison sentence. The first paragraph of the YOS *Century High School Teacher Handbook* includes this statement: "Your first priority in this correctional setting is providing security. Your second task is to be a teacher."[107]

While on-site, researchers observed that the focus on security was paramount but it was done in conjunction with a philosophy that prioritized programming. For example, some sanctions result in pulling the inmate out of school. These are used rarely because administrators want residents engaged in the classroom. However, when it does occur, the *Teacher Handbook* (page 9) states the following:

> *It is imperative that students' educations not be deprived because they are unable to come to class. Teachers MUST send assignments to students [in the Management Control Unit]. Teacher will walk the assignments to the offender in MCU and give the student any necessary explanations. It is important to tell the offender the date the assignment is due.*

Staff survey respondents made the following comments that seemed to reflect the integration of security and programming:

> *The best way to manage the population is to apply the programming. If you just apply punitive measures you're going to be battling them all the time. We're not doing our job when we go to the hammer right away.*

> *The overall mission is the safety and security of the public. Offender success is the main goal ...coupled with providing offenders with pro-social skills and skills to address daily issues.*

> *We have written policies as to offender conduct. ...Just because we are working with a younger population does not mean rules and policy need to be lenient.*

> *We have the same goal [as DOC]: reintegration.*

On this topic, one resident participant stated it clearly, regardless of the YOS philosophy:

> *If you're not willing to change, you're not going to get anything out of this program.*

In sum, the "prison versus program" tension has eased since prior DCJ evaluations of YOS, and both staff and offenders stated that the focus of the program was successfully returning offenders to the community. Security issues were paramount but security and programming were generally well integrated.

---

[107] The *Teacher Handbook* is not dated but it includes materials with dates of 2012.

Progress Assessment Summary

The Progress Assessment Summary (PAS) is prepared during the first 30 days while the offender is in IDO and is reviewed every six months by the offender and his or her progress team. In DCJ's 2004 study of YOS, both staff and residents reported that the residents had no input into their goals and that the PAS was not regularly reviewed with the offender. This does not appear to be the case currently.

By way of explanation, the PAS is an individualized plan that specifies the needs of the offender in the following areas: educational development and goals (including special needs if appropriate), cognitive skills, substance abuse, family support, behavior problems, custody concerns, and other areas identified by a multi-disciplinary staffing team[108] including physical, mental, social, and educational maturity. The plan identifies measurable goals and objectives and is intended to focus on preparing the offender for re-entry; failure to progress can result in regression or revocation to prison. The offender's primary advisor reviews (and potentially revises) the plan with the offender every six months.[109]

The Progress Team consists of at least three DOC employees and may include the individual advisor,[110] unit supervisor or staff member, clinical staff, or teacher. The Progress Team meets monthly to review each offender's status by assessing him or her in the following areas: positive attitude, negative behaviors, meeting goals and objectives, program compliance, participation in YOS activities, and documented chronological incidents. The Progress Team makes decisions about changes in the offender's status (progressive or regressive) and any special needs he or she may have.

The PAS may not be a focus of the YOS experience for the offenders, however. While over 80% of offender survey respondents were aware of their PAS, only about 65% reported that they knew what their PAS goals were and only about 30% said that the PAS clearly mapped out what was expected of them. Much more relevant to the survey respondents was their status in the behavioral management system, as identified by the Progress Team. As previously discussed, status directly relates to privileges and activities available during free time, and thus defines a large part of their experience during their YOS sentence. Many survey respondents were clear that they were focused on being successful during YOS and upon sentence completion, but this focus does not appear to be linked to their PAS.

---

[108] According to the *YOS Annual Report* (pages 19-20), the team may consist of the following staff: assessment lieutenant/treatment team coordinator, primary advisor, educational assessment specialist, clinical staff, certified addiction counselor, sex offender treatment therapist, intelligence officer, and correctional officers/drill instructors. See Y*outhful Offender System Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Department of Corrections, Office of Planning & Analysis.

[109] Youthful Offender System *Offender Reception and Orientation Manual* (January 2012), page 5. See also Administrative Regulation 1600-03.

[110] The Individual Advisor is assigned to 4 to 7 offenders and conducts weekly one-on-one meetings with each as the offender progresses from OTP, Phase I and Phase II (a new advisor is assigned for Phase III).

Health Issues

Several health issues surfaced during the course of the evaluation. These are summarized below.

The single most frequently mentioned concern by residents was lack of sleep.

Sleep. The single most frequently mentioned concern by residents was lack of sleep. Sleep issues were divided into two themes, last and first count and sleeping in. Residents are awakened at 4:45 a.m., and the last standing count is at 9 p.m. Nightly body checks[111] are done between count and 10 p.m. Many residents stated that they did not fall asleep immediately and this left them with less than seven hours of sleep each night. This situation was aggravated by an inability to sleep in on the weekends (when activities were at a minimum) or during the offender's free time.[112] The Centers for Disease Control and the National Sleep Foundation report that adolescents need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep and that adults need 7 to 9 hours.[113] Failure to achieve the proper amount of sleep can compromise mood, performance and alertness,[114] not to mention produce behavior management issues in the facility.

According to YOS policy, sleeping in and TV access are both weekend privileges that must be earned. For example, in a memorandum to the warden from one of the YOS supervisors that described a June 2012 weekend, two pods of Phase I offenders were allowed sleeping and TV privileges but one pod "had significant negative issues during the week" and was not allowed to participate.[115]

Medical. Data from resident focus groups reflected concerns about medical policies and practices. There is a cost associated with medical services: $3 for an office visit, $5 for an emergency.[116] Since jobs in prison pay less than $1 per day, offenders reported that this cost deters them from seeking medical treatment. Offenders reported that the choice for them is often between medical services and phone calls with family and canteen items.

Failure to achieve the proper amount of sleep can compromise mood, performance and alertness, not to mention produce behavior management issues in the facility.

I fell, hit my head, and they made me pay $5 to go to medical.

The quality of services was also called into question by resident focus group participants. Depending on the medical staff available, the treatment seemed to vary considerably. For example, one resident

---

[111] Body checks are performed by housing and security staff to identify injuries from possible fighting.

[112] For security reasons, most offenders are not allowed in their rooms during the day. Instead they are required to be in a common area. However, residents who have reached Phoenix status can be in their rooms during their free time and have more sleep options.

[113] See http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Sleep/ and http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need.

[114] Bonnet, M. H. & Arand, D. L. (1995). We are chronically sleep deprived. *Sleep*, 18(10), 908-911.

[115] Memo from Casey Warner to Steven Hager dated 6/13/2012, provided to researchers by the warden.

[116] Medical services are not withheld in the event that an offender does not have the money for an office visit. However, it is documented until he or she can pay the debt.

reported that he had a serious infection and upon seeing medical staff was told to return to his room and lance a boil-like growth himself. Later it was discovered that the growth was a serious infection that had the potential to infect others. The infection was eventually treated by a different medical staff person.

Dental. Problems with delays in receiving dental services were mentioned in four focus groups. Focus group participants reported submitting written requests for services (beyond routine cleanings) and waiting months for a response.

> *I put in a request to see the dentist in January and didn't get in until April. You can wait months to see the dentist.*

Food. About 15% of offenders in both IDO and Phase l complained about the amount of food, according to survey data. This concern was discussed in approximately half of the resident focus groups. Offenders complained that the portions were getting smaller and they were not getting enough to eat. On the other hand, about 5% of survey respondents said that one of the best things about YOS was the food.

About 15% of offenders in both IDO and Phase l complained about the amount of food, according to survey data. This concern was discussed in approximately half of the resident focus groups.

Staff Training

Staff training appears to be a strong point of YOS. Current annual training includes 32 hours of YOS-specific content in the following areas:

- Mission, vision, values, guiding principles;
- Sentencing statutes, legal issues;
- Phases and status levels;
- Gender specific programming;
- Security;
- Academic, vocational, special education and Title 1 programming;
- Adolescent nutrition;
- YOS programming (adolescent behavior and development, suicide prevention, sex offenders, anger management, substance abuse);
- DOC refresher courses (professionalism, COPD, use of force, report writing, safety);
- Crime scene management;
- YOS logical consequences and non-disciplinary resolutions;
- Restraints;
- Cognitive programming overview; and
- Games criminals play.

Data from staff focus groups and surveys indicate that the warden and assistant warden's participation in the annual training was much appreciated and was central to communicating a consistent message about the YOS philosophy and the administration's expectations of staff.

Data from staff focus groups and surveys indicate that the warden and assistant warden's participation in the annual training was much appreciated and was central to communicating a consistent message about the YOS philosophy and the administration's expectations of staff.

In addition to the annual training, YOS administrators developed an important on-the-job training effort called the Staff Training Program (STP). The turnover rate at YOS is low compared to other DOC facilities, according to interview data, but when new staff are hired they filter in throughout the year. The block training is offered once each year, so a need for immediate training for new staff led to the identification of a Shift Training Officer (STO), a senior staff member who introduces the new staff to the physical plant and posted orders regarding security, and explains how to work with the YOS population. Most new staff begin on the graveyard security shift, and this shift is the center of the STP. Working on the graveyard shift allows for learning YOS security requirements while having minimal interaction (at first) with YOS residents. As explained by the warden, once security becomes second nature, and when the new person transfers to a different position, they can focus their attention on the needs of the YOS offenders. The Third Shift Training Mission Statement states: "Cultivate a working environment that fosters a positive training atmosphere for new DOC employees and promotes an attitude of teamwork while managing offenders in a manner that is firm, fair, and consistent."[117] When asked about training in a focus group, one staff member praised this approach to training:

> *The [32-hour YOS training] gives you insight as to why we do what we do here, but the bonus is the STO on top of that. Interaction all the time with offenders is a different way to operate than what we do in adult facilities.*

Staff surveys asked about the need for additional training, and many respondents mentioned a desire for training in topics related to working with youth, including additional training in child and adolescent development, and mental health counseling with youth, communication/interpersonal skills and conflict management. A few respondents mentioned the need for additional training on youth gangs. One respondent noted a need for training on "how to be a role model." Additional areas of training need expressed in surveys were for Quick Skills, GGI, and the impact of substance abuse on cognition. One person said training on "ways to manage large groups of offenders with positive consequences" would be helpful, and another stated "more creative sanctions for negative behavior."

In prior evaluations, DCJ found a lack of mental health services at YOS. This does not appear to be the case currently.

Mental Health Services

In prior evaluations, DCJ found a lack of mental health services at YOS. This does not appear to be the case currently. According to interview data, a psychiatrist with a specialty in adolescents visits YOS approximately every six weeks to assess new admissions, monitor medication and oversee mental health care. Those few

[117] Administrative Regulation 1500-100.

offenders with serious mental health needs are monitored at least monthly. Those with serious acute problems are seen by a mental health clinician at least weekly. One resident focus group participant said:

> *They're on it with mental health stuff, but not as much with dental and medical. If we're in crisis it is taken care of. Mental Health care is personalized. If your mental health issues are severe enough they'll send you out of the facility.*

When asked on the resident survey how often they meet one-on-one with mental health staff, one-third of the responses said they had never met with a psychiatrist or psychologist, 8% said they met monthly with mental health staff, 9% said they met weekly with a psychiatrist or psychologist, and 48.5% said they met with mental health staff on an "as needed" basis. These responses are consistent with the information in Figure 3.12 showing the mental health needs of the YOS intake population over time. Higher scores reflect higher need levels; a score of 3 reflects moderate-to-high needs. Relatively few YOS offenders enter the facility with serious mental health needs according to the assessment that occurs at intake.

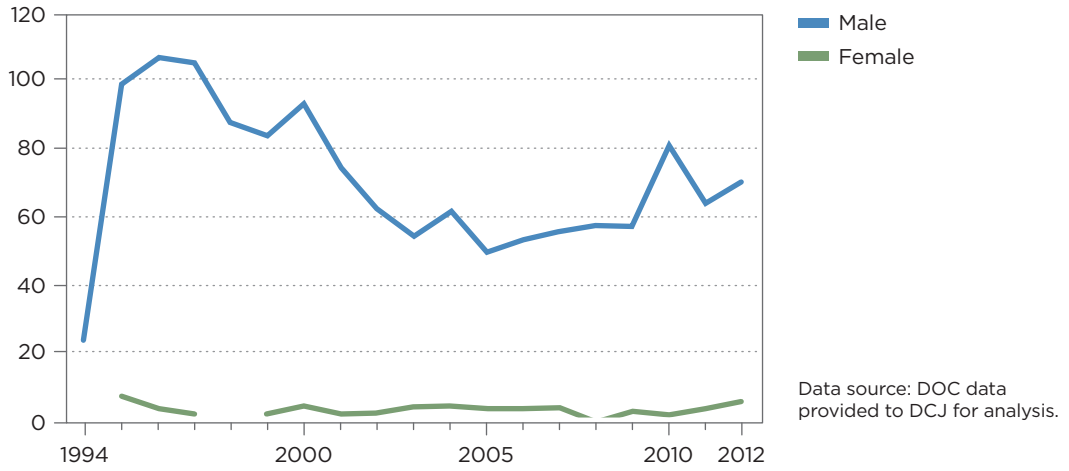
Figure 3.12. Mental health needs* of incoming YOS offenders, 1994-2012

*Category 1 means the person has no mental health needs; Category 2 means the person has low mental health needs, Category 3 means moderate mental health needs; Category 4 means the person may have high mental health needs; Category 5 means the person may have extremely high mental health needs.

Programming for Females

A common criticism of YOS is the differential programming available to the female offenders. Women constitute about 4% of the current YOS population; Figure 3.13 shows the number of females at admission to YOS over time. During the evaluation, there were nine women at the YOS facility, with one woman transitioning to the community toward the end of the study.

Figure 3.13. Gender of incoming population (count), 1994-2012 (n=1414)



The separation of men and women is a fundamental safety decision; comingling of males and females requires the supervision of both male and female staff. But this separation leads to inequities, and makes female-only programming cost inefficient. The women residents voiced concern about the inequities, including lack of access to vocational programming and many of the college classes, and the library.

> *Our library time is really limited. The males have a lot more options. We get to use their library only once a week.*

Staff, also, expressed the problems associated with programming for the women:

> *Males' and females' education is vastly different.*

> *The females don't get the choice on classes; they're totally isolated. When the schedule comes out for school, they don't get to sign up the ways the boys do. They don't get the same choices because they're isolated and a small number.*

> *The women...don't get the advantage of being in the...hands on classroom.*

The men are able to go from classroom to classroom during the day; it has the feel of a high school. The women have a single classroom and it has the feel of home schooling. Nevertheless, the GED and high school programming is similar for men and women. Participation in electives and vocational/technical training is where the major differences in opportunities appear. For example, the automotive elective was offered once to the females. Rather than the women going to the site where the engine existed (where they would have a hands-on experience), the teacher brought some tools to the women in their classroom. In another example, the men have access to cosmetology programming throughout the week while the women have access for two hours each week, and it is not uncommon for these two hours to get cancelled because of the instructor's absence. Consequently, the women cannot acquire the hours of credit necessary to become credentialed, even with lengthy YOS sentences.[118] The women stated during a focus group:

> *We've been in cosmetology for a year and we're STILL not on nails yet, because we can't get enough hours in to even get to that point.*
>
> *It takes two semesters of every day teaching to get certified to use scissors.*

The separation of men and women is a fundamental safety decision; comingling of males and females requires the supervision of both male and female staff. But this separation leads to inequities, and makes female-only programming cost inefficient. The women residents voiced concern about the inequities, including lack of access to vocational programming and many of the college classes, and the library.

Additionally, because of the low number of female residents and the need for basic cost efficiencies, the women vote on their programming, regardless of individual desires. One staff member commented:

> *The girls have group choice as opposed to individual; it's sad that they don't get the same exposure to the educational staff that everyone else gets.*

One of the women stated in a focus group:

> *What one girl does, all girls do. We always have to do things as an entire group.*

The few women sentenced to YOS will always pose a significant challenge regarding their programming. Discussions with YOS officials during this study confirmed awareness—a longstanding awareness—of this issue, and openness to considering ways to expand programming, such as considering ways to increase the time the women can engage in cosmetology programming.

The few women sentenced to YOS will always pose a significant challenge regarding their programming.

---

[118] The following are the Colorado State Board of Cosmetology Licensing Requirements: Cosmetologist: 1800 hours (60 credits); Barber: 1500 hours (50 credits); Cosmetician: 600 hours (20 credits); Manicurist: 600 hours (20 credits); Hairstylist: 1200 (40 credits). See http://www.intelliteccollege.com/blog/317/how-to-get-your-cosmetology-licensing-in-colorado/

The YOS operations are generally consistent with statute and likely represent the intent of the drafters of the original YOS legislation.

In sum, then, the YOS operations are generally consistent with statute and likely represent the intent of the drafters of the original YOS legislation. Prior DCJ evaluations did not make this finding. Nevertheless, inconsistency in the application of rewards and sanctions, across staff and across units, will continue to challenge YOS administrators who have provided staff with significant discretion in developing individualized responses to residents' behaviors. The move to its current and more crowded facility six years ago seems to have led to an increase in facility disturbances and assaults and, again, administrators are challenged to find methods of managing antisocial behaviors. The acquisition and retrofitting of Building 20 seems an important way of reducing management problems by way of providing additional activities, including high-energy activities that can be undertaken in the Building 20 gymnasium. Programming for women continues to be problematic; the acquisition of Building 20 would expand areas for programming that may benefit the women. Because YOS is not a traditional prison, and because staff interactions with offenders are a fundamental strategy for promoting a pro-social environment and meeting the objectives of the YOS enabling statute, in-service staff training on topics related to adolescent development and communication techniques is an ongoing need. The aging of the incoming population means that YOS needs to provide even more post-GED/high school education and vocational opportunities. With a strong staff and administration, and positive morale, the YOS is positioned to positively impact the lives of many offenders. Indeed, 70% to 80% of YOS participants successfully complete their sentence and, of those who do, only one-third returned to prison with a new conviction over a 16 year follow-up. These are positive outcomes, especially given the very serious nature of the YOS population.

With a strong staff and administration, and positive morale, the YOS is positioned to positively impact the lives of many offenders.

Section 4:

Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this report, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Two issues surfaced regarding providing consequences for inappropriate behavior. First, consequences are delivered inconsistently; they vary across staff members, and they vary within a single staff member across the course of the day. This inconsistency is frustrating for both staff and residents, and leads to dissention among both staff and offenders. **YOS administrators should work with supervisors to identify gaps in consistency of rule enforcement while recognizing the value of individualizing the delivery of consequences**.

   Second, YOS indeed provides consequences for misconduct, yet there are few in-the-moment consequences available for staff to recognize positive behavior. The chronological documentation is key to ultimately moving through the behavioral management system at YOS. However, these are reviewed monthly, delaying any immediate reward or sanction linked to privileges. The chrons, then, which are instrumental for determining offender status levels, do not necessarily meet the expectation in social learning theory that sanctions be immediately applied. **Efforts to identify immediate rewards, currently underway by the YOS administration and staff, should continue**. For example, to recognize positive behavior, YOS staff recently began to issue playing cards (immediately) that are later exchanged for candy. This is an excellent method to immediately reward positive behavior. Due to the fact that limited phone calls with family, TV time, and opportunities for sleeping-in were frequent complaints from residents, including these as possible immediate rewards for staff to use may also be highly motivating for offenders.

2. **Every effort should be undertaken to acquire more useable space on the current YOS campus**. For example, Building 20 which exists on the YOS grounds but belongs to the Department of Human Services, has a small gymnasium and other areas that could be used to increase the number and frequency of activities available to YOS offenders. One suggestion from a YOS staff member was to provide to offenders technical training in asbestos eradication and management, and use

these skills to reenlist existing buildings on the YOS campus that are currently uninhabitable. This could provide a valuable marketable skill set for the residents and address space issues at the same time.

3. H.B. 09-1122 extended the age limit at sentencing of YOS-eligible offenders from 19 to 21. Hence, the average age of the YOS population has been increasing, and a pressing need for advanced and additional programming continues to grow. **Continue with the expansion of available college-level classes and vocational training**.

4. Given the multitude of programming planning and efforts underway to meet the demands of the current population (described in #3 above), **YOS administrators should continue to work with stakeholders to develop a statute that would eliminate the October 1, 2012 repeal date of H.B. 09-1122**.

5. **Expand programming for women**. For example, explore ways to expand cosmetology programming for the women offenders at YOS by 1) reduce the hours available to the men and reallocate those hours to the women, 2) expand cosmetology classes into evening hours, or 3) install a barber chair and sink and bring an additional teacher into the women's facility. Also, consider providing the women access to a full kitchen by reversing the housing for Phase ll men and the women. This would provide the women scratch-cooking skills that could translate into life skills and employment upon release.

6. **YOS administrators should continue to provide the 32-hour YOS-specific training program and consider adding occasional in-service training opportunities that address effective communication strategies and skills, conflict management, and role modeling**.

7. **YOS administrators should continue the current screening and recruitment process that seems to identify staff who are a good fit for the YOS philosophy**. This approach, combined with appropriate training and leadership, has helped resolve the "prison versus program" tension that was found in DCJ's earlier evaluations of YOS.

8. Because of the health concerns consistently reported in these areas (and discussed in this report), **YOS officials should revisit current policies concerning sleep, fees for medical services, and food portions**.

9. **YOS administrators should review Phase ll and Phase lll programming and community service activities to ensure that there is an adequate focus on long term employment**.

Appendix A:

Interview Guides and Questionnaires

Interview/Focus Group Guide: Staff

1. What made you want to work at YOS?

2. Have there been changes to programming, morale and/or interactions with youth due to administrative changes and legislative changes[119] over the past 18 months?

3. How do you think YOS is different from prison?

4. Do you have enough tools at your disposal to deal with misbehavior? Please describe the options.

5. How are incentives and rewards handled? Are the incentives that are available sufficient?

6. Please describe the programming for residents with an ICE/INS hold?

7. Regarding the Program Assessment Summary (PAS)[120]
    a. What are they?
    b. What is contained in them?
    c. Are they useful?

8. What is the current practice regarding separating the females?
    a. What would be the ideal practice to best serve the needs of females?

9. What vocational programming is available to the females?

10. After intake, when are youth allowed to begin class work toward their diploma/GED?

11. What education is available for those who complete high school or GED?

12. Do you have adequate access to translators for Spanish-speaking youth and their families?

13. Has YOS changed since it began to take older offenders in January 2011?

14. Do you have any safety concerns? For the females? For the males?

15. How are you using Evidence-Based Correctional Practices?

16. What suggestions do you have for improving YOS?

---

[119] In January 2011, older youth ages 18-20 became YOS-eligible, per statute.

[120] This is an assessment of the data quality of the PAS.

Interview Guide: Administration/Education/Medical

1. What made you want to work at YOS?
    a. Previous experience with youth?
2. Have you observed changes to the program over time?
3. What are your thoughts about…
    a. The separation of the female residents from the male residents?
    b. Staff/youth interactions?
    c. Staff morale?
    d. The case flow from facility to community (from Phase 2 to Phase 3)?
    e. The vocational programs available to
        i. Males
        ii. Females
    f. Program waiting lists?
4. Do you feel you have an adequate number/kind of incentives/consequences to manage the behavior of residents?
5. Is there equal access to programming for both males and females?
6. Do you have concerns about safety for staff or residents?
7. Is the offender involved in the development of the PAS and/or their individual treatment plan?
8. Has YOS changed since it began to accept older offenders in January 2011?
9. If you could, what changes would you make to YOS?

Focus Group Guide: Residents

1. Why did you make the decision to come to YOS instead of opting for a regular prison sentence?
2. What skills have you acquired during your time at YOS?
3. What are the strengths of the program?
4. What are the weaknesses of the program?
    a. Missing anything?
    b. Ideas for improvements?
5. What changes have you seen in the program over time?
    a. Incentives?
    b. Programming?
    c. Punitive Segregation?
    d. Since older residents began being accepted into YOS?
6. Tell us about the interactions between staff and residents.
7. Do feel safe here at YOS? Do you think others feel safe at YOS? (Describe)
8. Are there areas where you can go where the staff can't see you and you can kind of retreat there?
9. If you are having a tough time, or if you are feeling sick or hurt, do you feel like you have access to services that could help you?
10. How is YOS preparing you to go out into the community?
11. (Program Team Reviews?) Program Assessment Summary (PAS)
    a. What are these?
    b. What is contained in them?
    c. Are they useful?
    d. Do they clearly map out what you need to do to progress in the program?
    e. How
12. Program Team Reviews?
13. Family participation/family support
    a. Is it encouraged?
14. How many here residents are bilingual? Do the staff every make use of your bilingual skills? If so, how?

Additional Questions for Females

1. When are you together with the males and when are you separated? How does that work? How do you feel when you are/are not separated from the males?

2. Were you able to start school as soon as you got here? How long did you have to wait?

3. Can you take college courses if you want to?

4. Do you feel safe in your living arrangement?

Focus Group Guide: Younger Residents

1. Why did you make the decision to come to YOS instead of opting for a regular prison sentence?
2. What skills have you acquired during your time at YOS?
3. *Do you feel you are treated differently because you are younger (either by staff or YOS offenders)?
4. What are the strengths of the program?
5. What are the weaknesses of the program?
    a. Missing anything?
    b. Ideas for improvements?
6. What changes have you seen in the program over time?
    a. Incentives?
    b. Programming?
    c. Punitive Segregation?
    d. Since older residents began being admitted to YOS?
7. Tell us about the interactions between staff and residents.
8. Do feel safe here at YOS? Do you think others feel safe at YOS? (Describe)
9. Are there areas where you can go where the staff can't see you and you can kind of retreat there?
10. If you are having a tough time, or if you are feeling sick or hurt, do you feel like you have access to those kinds of services?
11. How is YOS preparing you to go out into the community?
12. Program Assessment Summary (PAS)
    a. What are these?
    b. What is contained in them?
    c. Are they useful?
    d. Do they clearly map out what you need to do to progress in the program?
13. Program Team Reviews?
14. Family participation/family support
    a. Is it encouraged?

Questionnaire: Resident

Please fill out the survey to the best of your knowledge and also please write as neatly and clearly as you can. Please circle the correct answer.

1. Gender a. Male b. Female

2. Age _____

3. I am (please circle)
   a. White
   b. Hispanic
   c. Black
   d. Asian
   e. Native American
   f. Other

4. How long have you been in YOS? _____Years _____Months

5. What Phase are you currently in? (please circle the correct answer)
   a. Intake/Diagnostic/Orientation/IDO/Bootcamp
   b. Phase 1
   c. Phase 2

6. How long did you spend in each phase (Put N/A—for not applicable—if you haven't been in a phase yet)

   Amount of time:
   a. _____Intake/Diagnostic/Orientation/IDO/Bootcamp
   b. _____Phase 1
   c. _____Phase 2

7. Have you ever been regressed? a. Yes b. No

8. Have you ever been put into Punitive Segregation? a. Yes b. No

   If yes, for how long? _____

9. Have you ever been disciplined in any other ways: a. Yes b. No

10. If yes, how have you been disciplined?

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. What convinced you to choose YOS over adult prison?

_____
_____
_____
_____

12. If you could choose over again, would you still choose YOS? a. Yes b. No

13. What is the reason for your answer in 12, above?

_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Does your family participate in the program? a. Yes b. No

15. If yes, in what way does your family participate in YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____

16. How often do you meet one-on-one with a psychiatrist/psychologist/counselor?
    a. Never
    b. Daily
    c. Weekly
    d. Monthly
    e. As needed

17. What groups or YOS programs have been most useful or important to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. Do you have a Program Assessment Summary (PAS)? a. Yes b. No
    a. If yes, do you know what the goals of your PAS are? a. Yes b. No
    b. Does the PAS clearly map out what is expected of you so that you can progress in the program? a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not really d. No

19. Do you feel safe at YOS? a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not really d. No

a. What makes you feel safe at YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____

b. What makes you feel unsafe at YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____

20. What parts of YOS are helping you to prepare for your future after YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____

21. What do you feel are the BEST THINGS about YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

22. What do you feel are the WORST THINGS about YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

23. What suggestions do you have for improving YOS?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for your time completing this survey!

Questionnaire: YOS Staff

***Instructions**: Please complete the survey to the best of your knowledge. If a question does not pertain to you, please write N/A (not applicable) next to the question. If you need more room to write, feel free to use the back of the page.*

1. Job title _____

2. Employment status: a. State employee b. Contract employee

3. Work shift: a. Day b. Swing c. Graveyard d. Administrative

4. Gender a. Male b. Female

5. Highest education
   a. High school diploma
   b. GED
   c. Some college
   d. College degree
   e. Some graduate school
   f. Graduate school

6. How long have you been working with Colorado DOC? _____years _____months

7. How long have you been working at YOS? _____years _____months

8. Prior to this job, did you have experience working with juveniles, including juvenile offenders? a. Yes b. No

9. Do you feel that your education/experience adequately prepared you for working with this population? a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not really d. No

10. Do you expect to finish your career at YOS?
    a. Yes b. Probably c. Maybe d. No

11. Would you like to have additional training? a. Yes b. No
    a. If so, what type of training would you find valuable?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

12. Do you see yourself as a role model for the YOS residents?
    a. Yes b. Sometimes c. Not really

13. How would you describe the current level of morale at YOS?

a. Very poor b. Poor c. OK d. Good e. Very good

Please explain your answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Do you think there is adequate communication across shifts and phases?

a. Yes b. somewhat c. not really d. No

Please explain your answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Do the goals and philosophies of YOS differ from those of DOC? a. Yes b. No

a. If yes, please describe how they differ:

_____
_____
_____
_____

15. Do you think there is a consistent philosophy between facility administrators and line staff who work directly with residents?

a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not really d. No

Please explain your answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

16. If you could improve YOS, what would you change?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!