

Youthful Fire Setters Intervention and Prevention

A Look into the Minds of Youthful Fire Setters;
Bring Psychology to the Fire Scene and Beyond



Relative Definitions:

Arson: Arson is the willful and, malicious burning of property (Douglas, et al, 1992). The Criminal act of arson is divided into three elements (DeHann, 1991):

- There has been a burning of property. This must be shown to the court to be actual destruction, at least in part, not just scorching or sooting.
- The burning is incendiary in origin. Proof of the existence of an effective incendiary device, no matter how simple it may be, is adequate. Proof must be accomplished by showing specifically how all possible natural or accidental cases have been considered and ruled out.
- The burning is shown to be started with malice, that is, with specific intent of destroying property.

Relative Definitions

- Arsonist: A person apprehended, charged and convicted of one or more arsons (Douglas, et al, 1992).
- Accelerant- Accelerants are any type of material or substance added to the targeted materials to enhance the combustion of those materials and to accelerate the burning.
- Mass Arson- Mass arson involves an offender who sets three or more fires at the same site or location during a limited period of time (Douglas, et al, 1992).
- Spree Arson- Spree arson involves an arsonist who sets three or more fires at separate locations with no emotional cooling-off period between fires (Douglas, et al, 1992).
- Serial Arson- Serial arson involves an offender who sets three or more fires with a cooling-off period between the fires (Douglas, et al, 1992).

Arson Classification by Style and Type (Sapp, et al.)

	Single	Double	Triple	Mass	Spree	Serial
Style of Number Fires	1	2	3	3 or more	3 or more	3 or more
Number of Events	1	1	1	1	1	3 or more
Number of Sites	1	2	3	1	3 or more	3 or more
Cool-off Period	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

The terms single, double, and triple arsons are shown to be the number of fires set at one site at one time in a single event.

FBI Study of Arsonists and their Motives

(Developed by Rider and Sapp, et al.)

Serial Arsonists: General Profile

- Most serial arsonists are young, white (82 %) males (94%).
- Most serial arsonists have a below average intelligence score.
- Most serial arsonists have poor histories of academic performance, severe scholastic impairments, and significant grade failures. These may not be intellectual impairment, but poor home environments.
- Most serial arsonists come from disruptive, frustrating, harsh, broken, or unstable home environments.
- Most serial arsonists have poor social skills and difficulty with social relationships.

Serial Arsonist Profile

- Most serial arsonists have poor marital adjustment.
- Most serial arsonists have poor employment history
- Some or All have mental health issues.
- Sexual disturbance- “fire setting functions as sexual substitute.”
 - Physical Deformities and Defects
 - Enuresis/ Bed Wetting
 - Alcoholism
 - Sadistic- Aggressive Tendencies
 - DSM-IV diagnosis

Serial Arsonist Profile

- Most serial arsonists have prior felony arrest and two thirds have multiple prior felony arrests.
- Two in three serial arsonists have a misdemeanor arrest record with most having multiple misdemeanor arrests.
- Most serial arsonists have spent time in various types of institutions.
- There are considerably more juvenile offenders but many decrease over time or end fire setting activities around the age of 17-19.

Serial Arsonist Profile

- The serial arsonists who continue their criminal fire setting after age 19 become more frequent offenders, setting more fires than their younger counterparts.
- Most serial arsonists walked to the scene of fires they set, with 70% of the fires set within a radius of two miles or less from the residence of the serial arsonist.
- Almost all of the fires were set in areas familiar to the serial arsonist.
- Serial arsonists use unsophisticated methods in setting fires. They use available materials, paper, and gasoline as the most common accelerants and matches or cigarette lighters for ignition of the fires.
- Over one-half leave items at the scene, usually a match.

Serial Arsonist Profile

- Over 50% of serial arsonists return to the scene.
- Of those that return to the scene, 97% did so within 24 hours of the arson.
- The majority of serial arsonists set only one fire in a location. However, some return to set new fires in the same place many times.
- The frequency of fire setting by serial arsonists usually does not significantly change over time.
- The severity of the fires set by serial arsonist tends to increase over time.

Psychology of Fire Setting

- Fire Setting- is often a symptom of a highly complex behavioral problem.
- Motive- an inner drive or impulse that causes a person to do something or act in a certain way
- Motive- is the cause, the reason, and the incentive
- Motive is the “Why”
- Motive plays a critical role in determining the cause of the fire, and what type of individual set the fire.
- There are several types of motivational fire setting
- There is also motiveless or irresistible impulse fire setting know as pyromania (lack of conscious motive, but fully aware of fire setting act)

Fire Setters might be:

- Fully aware of why they are setting the fire
- Somewhat cognizant of the reason
- Totally Unaware of their true motivation

Pathological vs. Nonpathological Motivation

- Nonpathological- result of rational decision making
Examples: arson for profit, extortion, protest, revenge, concealment of a crime, etc.
- Pathological- irrational fire setters that manifests to some degree some form of mental, emotional, or personality disturbance, maladjustment, or defect.

Set fires because:

Aggression, hostility, revenge, attention, recognition, embellish deflated sense of self worth, experience excitement, obtain sensual or sexual satisfaction, result of delusions and or hallucinations

Non-Pathological Fire Setters

- Vandalism-Motivated Arson
- Personal Retaliation
- Societal Retaliation
- Institutional Retaliation
- Group Retaliation
- Crime Concealment-Motivated Arson
- Profit-Motivated Arson
- Extremist-Motivated Arson

Pathological Groups:

- Accidental or unintentional- fire setters who set fires during a temporary, confused, or delirious state or with lack of judgment because of intellectual disabilities.
- Delusional Group- psychotic fire setters who set fires because so instructed by the hallucinated voicing of God or other authority or while under the delusionary influence of ideas of purification
- Erotic Group- pyromaniacs and a large variety of fire setters having sexual perversions
- Revenge Group
- Children's Group- children who set fires for excitement and mischief with the intention of extinguishing them before the fires get out of hand
- Psychotics, Psychopaths, and Intellectual Disabled (below normal intelligence) - set fires because of social order which acts against their interest, vengeance, jealous rage, perform heroics as fire fighters, perverted sexual pleasure

Pathological Groups

- Excitement-Motivated Arson
- Excitement-Thrills Motivation
- Excitement-Attention Motivation
- Excitement-Recognition Motivation
- Revenge-Motivated Arson

Childhood Disorders

- Conduct Disorder
- Autism Disorder
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Conduct Disorder (APA,2013)

- A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past 6 months:
- Aggression to people and animals
 - often bullies, threatens, or intimidates others
 - often initiates physical fights
 - has used a weapon that can cause serious physical harm to others
 - has been physically cruel to people
 - has been physically cruel to animals
 - has stolen while confronting a victim
 - has forced someone into sexual activity

CD (APA, 2013)

- Destruction of property
 - has deliberately engaged in fire setting with the intention of causing serious damage
 - has deliberately destroyed other's property (other than by fire setting)
- Deceitfulness or theft
 - has often broken into someone else's house, building, or car
 - often lies to obtain goods or favors or to avoid obligations
 - has stolen items of nontrivial value without confronting a victim

CD (APA, 2013)

- Serious violations of rules
 - often stays out at night despite parental prohibitions, beginning before age 13 years
 - has run away from home overnight at least twice while living in parental or parental surrogate home
 - is often truant from school, beginning before age 13
- The disturbance in behavior causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning
- If the individual is age 18 years or older, criteria are not met for APD

Autism Spectrum Disorder (APA, 2013)

- Persistent deficits in social communication and social interactions across multiple contexts
- Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interest, or activities
- Symptoms must be present in the early developmental period
- Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning
- These disturbances are not better explained by intellectual disabilities or global developmental delay



Adult Disorders

- Pyromania
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia Spectrum & Other Psychotic Disorders
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Anti-Social Personality Disorder and Psychopathy

Pyromania (APA,2013)

- Deliberate and purposeful fire setting on more than one occasion
- Tension of affective arousal before the act
- Fascination with interest in, curiosity about, or attraction to fire and its situational contexts.
- Pleasure, gratification, or relief when setting fires, or when witnessing or participating in their aftermath.

Pyromania (APA,2013)

- The fire setting is not done for monetary gain, as an expression of sociopolitical ideology, to conceal a criminal activity, to express anger or vengeance, to improve one's living circumstances, in response to a delusion or hallucination or as a result of impaired judgment
- The fire setting is not better accounted for by conduct disorder, a manic episode, or antisocial personality disorder

Profile of a Typical Pyromaniac (Lewis and Yarnell)

- Age: Heaviest concentration between ages 16-28; highest frequency at age 17
- Sex: male
- Race: Predominately white
- Intelligence: Ranging from intellectual disability to genius
- Physical Defects: Frequently present
- Mental Disorder: Psychopathy, Psychotic Disorders, OCD
- Academic Adjustment: Poor educational adjustment
- Rearing Environment: Parental neglect and pathological, also poor and harsh
- Social Class Structure: Some middle and upper, most lower
- Social Adjustment: Socially maladjusted, sever problems in forming relationships
- Martial Adjustment: Poorly adjusted
- Sexual Adjustment: Sexually maladjusted and inadequate

Pyromaniac

- Employment History: unskilled laborers, spotty employment histories
- Personality: some psychopathic traits, as well as a repressed rage and hatred towards authority but also have an inter-dependency for authority, apologetic but ashamed of being, some narcissistic traits.
- Criminal History- history present
- Use of Alcohol- self-medication
- Suicide- Some attempt after arrest or incarceration

Pyromaniac

- Number of Fire- numerous fires until they get caught
- False Alarms- known to set false alarms
- Time of Day- night time
- Regard for life- none
- Type of Fire Setter- Solitary
- Arrest: seemed to release them from there impulses
- Confession- readily confessed
- Selection of Targets: Random no reason

Motives

- Desire to be a hero or center of attention
- Desire to show themselves significantly clever
- Enjoy the destruction of property
- Irresistible impulse
- Revenge
- Sexual Satisfaction

Types of Fires:

- Fire generally made in haste and in a disorganized fashion, often set in rubbish, basements, and in and around inhabited dwellings, office buildings, schools, hotels and other structures in thickly populated sections of the city

Emotional State Before

- Mounting tension and anxiety; restlessness and an urge for motion, headaches, pressure in the head, dizziness, ringing in the ears, palpitations, the sense that the personality was merging into the state of unreality, and an uncontrollable urge or irresistible impulse to set fires

Emotional State During

- Dissociative State: a transient sensation of being controlled by an external force- a feeling of being automated

Emotional State After

- Sense of relief and even exaltation

Psychopaths

- Social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plow their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets. Completely lacking in conscience and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret.

(Hare, 1993)

Key Symptoms of Psychopathy

- Emotional/Interpersonal
 - Glib and Superficial
 - Egocentric and Grandiose
 - Lack of Empathy and Remorse
 - Deceitful and Manipulative
 - Shallow Emotions

Key Symptoms of Psychopathy

- Social Deviance
 - Impulsive
 - Poor Behavior Controls
 - Need for Excitement
 - Lack of Responsibility
 - Early Behavioral Problems
 - Adult Antisocial Behavior

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- A pervasive pattern of disregard for and violations of the rights of other, occurring since age 15 years with three or more: behaviors that are against the law, deceitfulness, impulsivity, irritability & aggressiveness, recklessness, irresponsibility, lack of remorse.
- 18 years of age
- Conduct Disorder prior to 15 years

NFPA 921 Motives for Arson

- Vandalism
- Excitement
- Revenge
- Crime Concealment
- Profit
- Extremism



Motive is an inner drive or impulse that is the cause, reason, or incentive that induces or prompts a specific behavior

(NFPA 921, 2021)

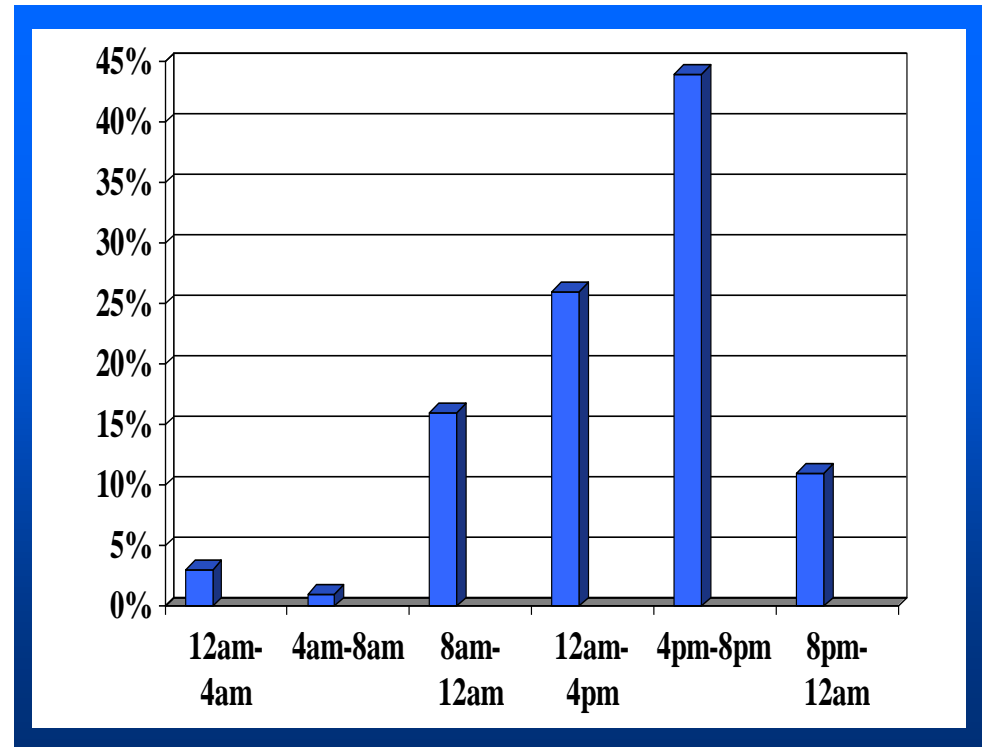
Youthful Fire Setter Statistics

- 55% of all Arson arrests are under the age of 18.
- Half of these arrests are age 15 and under.
- 7% are under the age of 10.
- 52% start fires in their bedrooms
- 90% percent of those that die in fires started by children are children
- Child set fires are the leading cause of death among preschoolers
- America has the highest arson rate in the world
- The crime of arson has the highest rate of youth involvement

Source: NFPA 2003 Statistics

The NFPA reports that annually FIRES set by children results in:

- 95,000 Fires
- 350 Deaths
- 3000 Injuries
- \$350 Million dollars in loss



*2007-2011 Statistics

NFPA- National Fire Protection
Assoc.

Natural Interest

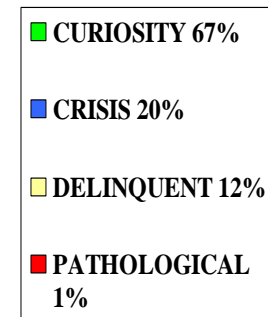
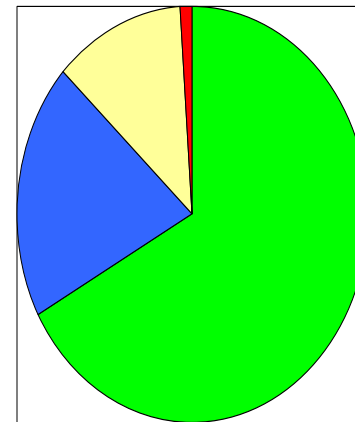
- Fire interest-asking questions & expressing interest through play
- Fire starting-exploration with ignition sources, controlled and supervised
- Fire setting –know the rules, participate in age-appropriate fire starting. Supervised versus unsupervised
- There is a normal curiosity and testing with younger males
- Males typically grow into other interests, and fire does not become a solution to a emotional or psychological problems

Presenting Problem

- Arson has the highest rate of recidivism than any other youth crime
- While youth who misuse fire are a small percentage, of the overall youth delinquent population, they cause the most damage
- Fires set by children/adolescents are more likely than any other household disaster to cause death.

Typologies for Child/Adolescent Fire Setters (Kolko et al, 2002)

- Curious Fire Setters
- Crisis Fire Setters
- Delinquent Fire Setters
- Pathological Fire Setters



	Curious / Accidental	Crisis	Delinquent
<u>Age:</u>	Younger Children (3-7 yr. olds)	Pre-adolescent (7-12 yr. olds)	Adolescents (13-18 yr. olds)
<u>Description:</u>	<p>Well adjusted / stable family</p> <p>Acceptable performance in school</p> <p>Intact peer relationships</p>	<p>Fire is a symptom of psychological pain</p> <p>Family turmoil / abuse / neglect</p> <p>Adequate school performance</p>	<p>Disrupted family attachments</p> <p>Disrupted peer relationships</p> <p>Poor performance in school</p> <p>Chronic behavior problems</p>
<u>Risk Level:</u>	Low to very little	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High
<u>Intervention:</u>	Fire Safety Education	Fire Safety Education, CBT, and Trauma Recovery	Fire Safety Education, MH Interventions, Residential Placement

Common Threads in Behavior

- Issues of Power and Control
- Limited Communication Skills
- Dysfunctional Models for Safe & Appropriate Behavior
- Distorted Perspectives on the Nature and Use of Fire
- Neglect, Abuse, Family Dynamics, and Environment



Curiosity Motivated Fire Setters

- Very Young Boys 2-7 yoa
- Impulsive & Difficulty in Controlling Behaviors
- ADHD
- Fire Setting-Stimulating, Intriguing, Powerful
- Easy Access to Fire
- Match Play & Small Fire
- Several Warning Signs
- Hidden Locations of Fire Play

Curiosity Motivated Fire Setters

- General Lack of Safety Awareness
 - Lack of Adequate Supervision
 - Plays with Fire to Learn About Fire
 - May Try to Extinguish the Fire
 - May Alert Parents
 - May Hide
-
- Parents and Child would benefit from education regarding fire safety and supervision.

Crisis Related Fire Setting

- History of Trauma
- Cry for Help
- Possibility of Abuse
- Inappropriate Coping Strategies/Problem Solving
- Highly Symbolic Fires
- Track to a Specific Point of Time-Arrival of Stressor
- Attention Seeking
- Chaotic & Frightening Experience
- Strike Back and Retaliation
- Control and Power

Delinquent-Related Fire Setting

- Defiance, Boredom, Rage, Insecurity, and Peer Pressure
- Typically, between the ages of 10-17
- Fires Set Outside the Home & Working in Groups
- Social Aspect & Peer Dominance
- History of Antisocial Behaviors or Rally Against Social Norms
- Lack of Adequate Supervision
- Dysfunction within the Family
- Impulsive & Irresponsible
- The Need for Accountability

Pathological

- Typically, between the ages of 10-17
- Possible higher IQ
- Victim of Physical or Sexual Abuse/Trauma/Adversity
- Parents are often Neglectful/Disruptive Attachments
- Home life in Unstructured
- Fires can be Ritualistic
- Fires are set to cause Harm & Destructions
- Fires are well planned and progresses in severity
- Could be proud of fires
- Conduct Disorder behaviors and symptomology

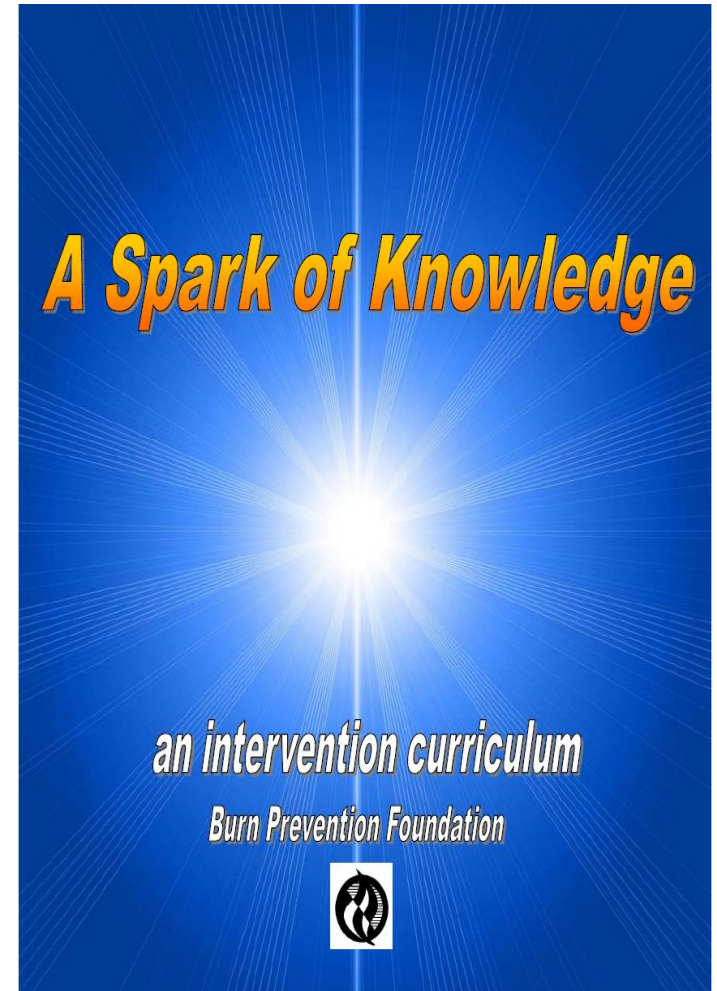
Cornell Abraxas JFS Profile (Alan Feldberg)

- Average number of Fires Set 27.6
- Average Assessment of Property Damage \$35,765
- Average Age of First Fire 9.6 years
- History of Sexual Abuse 38%
- History of Verbal Abuse & Humiliation 76 %
- History of Physical Abuse 78%
- History of Chronic Neglect 100 %

Abraxas a GGO Group Company		2014 YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE DOMAIN CURRICULUM MATRIX					1.800.ABRAXAS www.abraxasyfs.com	
PROGRAMS	Family Circumstance & Parenting	Education & Academic Skills	Peer Relations	Substance Abuse	Leisure, Recreation & Community Engagement	Personality / Behavior / Behavioral Health	Attitudes / Orientation	Employment / Workforce Development
Abraxas I Intensive Open Residential Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma, GED & College Career • Credit Recovery	• ABE • Core Prevention / Intervention • Character Development for Leadership	• Rape/Aggression Plan • The Truth About Drugs • Project Alert	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • PTSD • SELF Psycho Education	• ABE • Sex Violence Prevention	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Abraxas I Drug & Alcohol Girls Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma, GED & College Career • Credit Recovery	• Moving On • Girls Circle	• Living In Balance • Women's Way Through the 12 Steps • The Truth About Drugs	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Risk Decision Control & Addiction Thinking • Victim Awareness • SELF Psycho Education	• Anger Management • Transforming Anger into Personal Power • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention	• Girls Circle • Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Abraxas I Drug & Alcohol Boys Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma, GED & College Career • Credit Recovery	• Living In Balance	• Living In Balance • 12 Step Facilitation • The Truth About Drugs	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Risk Decision Control & Addiction Thinking • Victim Awareness • SELF Psycho Education	• Anger Management • Transforming Anger into Personal Power • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Abraxas I Social Training & Education Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma, GED & College Career • Credit Recovery	• New Direction Stabilization	• The Truth About Drugs • Project Alert	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Restitution • Community Service • SELF Psycho Education	• Beyond Anger • Transforming Anger into Personal Power • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Abraxas Residential Mental Health Services	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma, GED & College Career • Credit Recovery	• ABE • La Red Leadership Curriculum	• The Truth About Drugs • Project Alert	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • PTSD • SELF Psycho Education	• Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Leadership Development Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma & GED	• ABE • La Red Leadership Curriculum • Girls Circle • Career/Transfer Entrepreneurial Leadership Program (E&AP)	• Project Alert • CACCT Facilitator • Leadership Program Change	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • PMA Activities • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • PTSD • SELF Psycho Education	• ABE • Victim Awareness • La Red Leadership • Sex Violence Prevention • LEAP	• Girls Circle • Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Open Residential Resettler/Sex Offender Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma & GED	• ABE • Risk Council • Core Transfer Curriculum • Leadership Entrepreneurial Advokate Program (E&AP)	• Project Alert	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • LEAP	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • Core Transfer Curriculum • LEAP	• ABE • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention • The Safety	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	
Abraxas Youth Center Secure Resettler/Sex Offender Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • High School Diploma & GED	• ABE • Core Transfer Curriculum • Team on Target (Core Violence Prevention) • Healthy Menstruation	• The Truth About Drugs	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service	• ABE • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention • The Safety	• Annual Camp	
Abraxas Academy Secure Habitual Offender & Sex Offender Program	• Annual Camp • CTE program • Employment Sub Skills • Credit Recovery • PECS & IET Training • Robotics	• ABE • La Red Leadership Curriculum	• Matrix Model for Teens and Young Adults	• Victim Awareness • Restitution • Community Service • Secondary Model Groups • Intentional Sports	• CBT - Thinking Errors • Victim Awareness • PTSD • SELF Psycho Education	• ABE • Victim Awareness • Sex Violence Prevention	• Annual Camp • Employment Sub Skills	

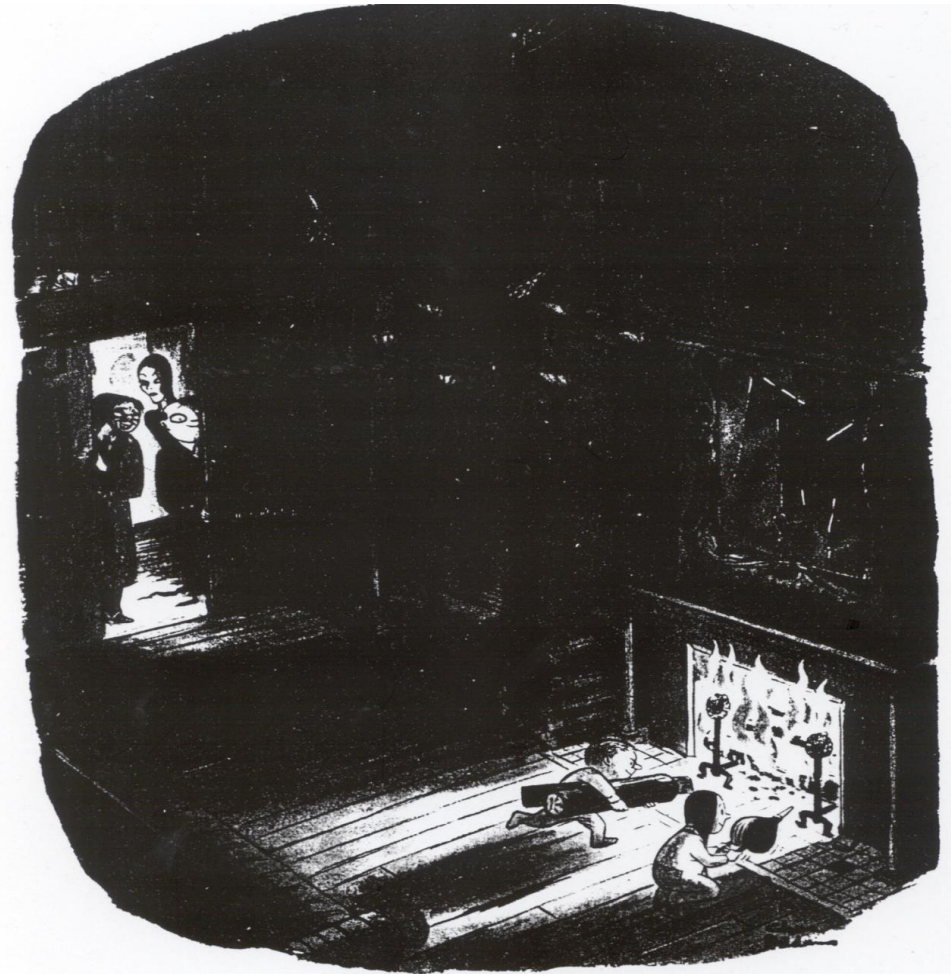
Components of an Intervention Program (Gaynor, 2002)

- Identification to Assignment
- Evaluation
- Education
- Referral
- Exit to Follow Up Interview



Referral Sources to Intervention (Gaynor, 2002)

- Fire Services
- Parents
- School
- Child Care Facilities
- Police
- Juvenile Justice
- Social Services
- Mental Health Services
- Medical Centers



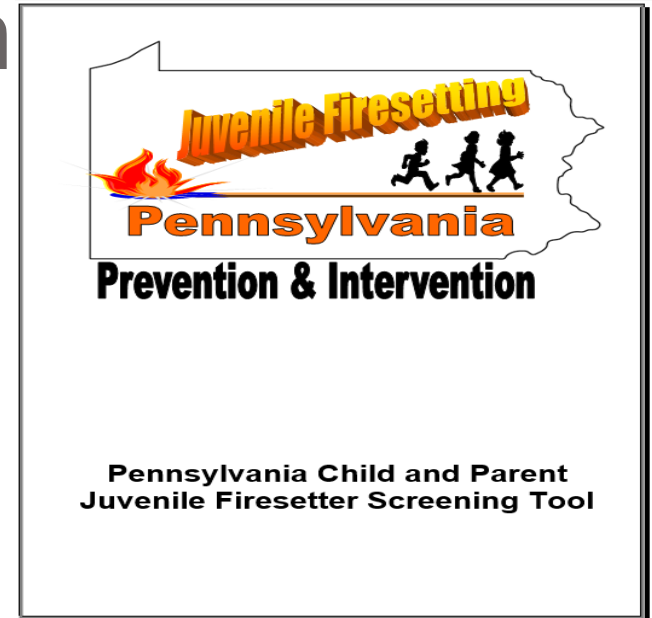
"The little dears! They still believe in Santa Claus."

Referral Target Agencies (Gaynor 2002)

- Social Services
 - Counseling, CPS, Financial & Housing Assistance
- Mental Health Services
 - Counseling and Therapy & Psychological & Psychiatric Services
- Criminal Justice System
 - Juvenile Court, District Attorneys, Police, Detention, and Restitution

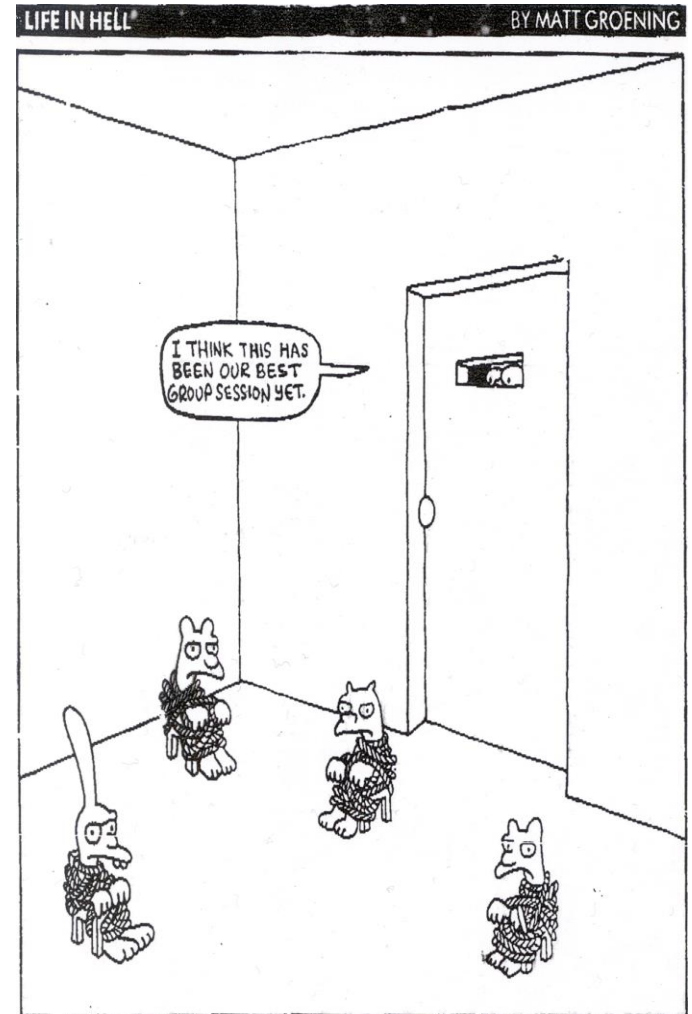
Interventions for Youth (Kolko, 2002)

- Assessment
 - Valid and Reliable Protocols
 - History & Knowledge of Fire
 - & Behavioral, Cognitive,
Social, & Emotional, and Family Functioning
- Education
 - One of Our Most Potent Intervention Tools
- Psychological & Psychiatric Services
 - Counseling, Psychotropic Medications, Crisis Intervention,
Residential Treatment, & Placement Outside the Home
- Accountability



The Six Characteristics of Effective Intervention Programs

- An Educator with Know-How
- An Educator with Ways
- An Educator with Means
- Family and Caregiver Involvement
- Ongoing and Careful Interventions
- A Network of Professionals in Place

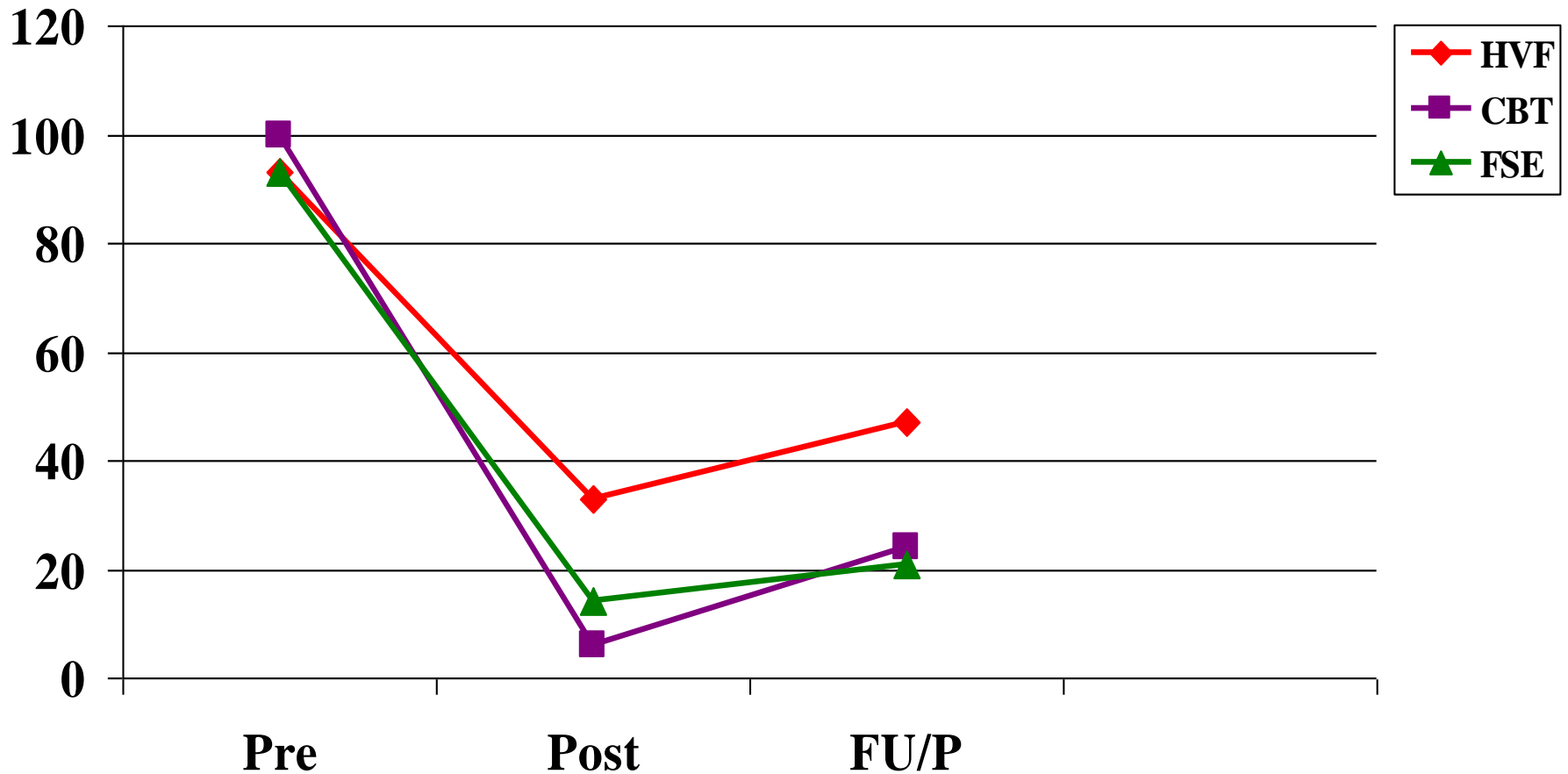


Prevention (Gaynor, 2002)

- Education
 - Schools, Fire Service, Burn Centers, Red Cross
- Support
 - Peer Counseling, Tutoring, Family/Parent Training, Case Management, Community Programs & Resources
- Protection
 - Community Policing, Adult Supervised Programs, Neighborhood Watch

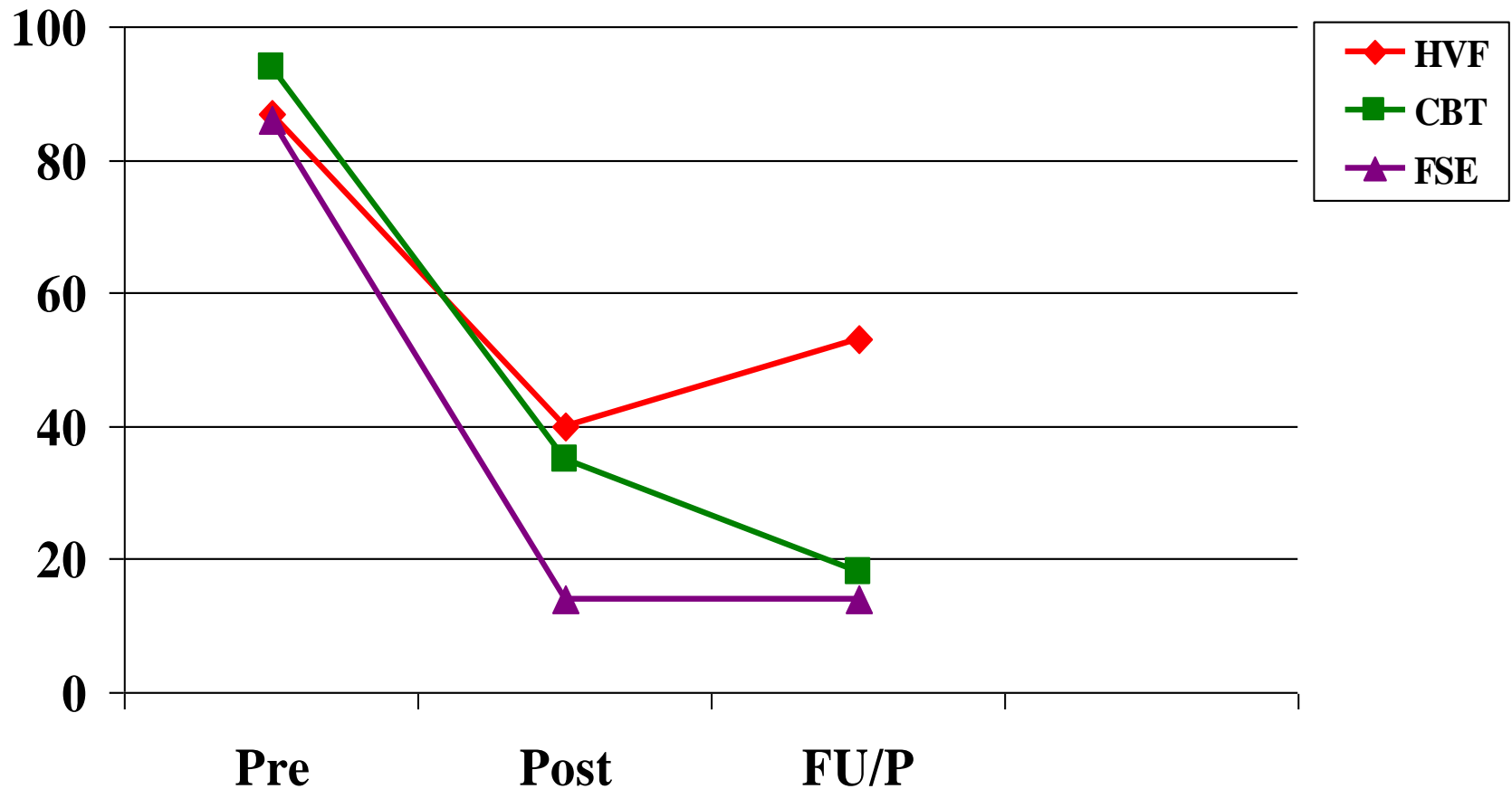
Cases with Any Fireplay- Child

(Kolko, 2001)



Cases with Any Fire Play-Parent

(Kolko,2001)




Youthful Firesetter Intervention

- Office of the State Fire Commissioner
 - Taskforce, Advisory Board, Protocol, Assessment (Material for reference only. Please contact the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for training and utilization.)
 - Handbook on FireSetting in Children & Youth, Kolko, 2002
 - Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook, FEMA 2000
- Multi-disciplinary Team Review (MDT)
 - Education, Mental Health, Juvenile Probation, Child & Family Services
 - Montgomery County PIP

Montgomery County PIP

- Referrals to the Program
 - Community Referrals
 - Crisis Referrals
- Assessment
 - PA Protocol
 - Fire Service & Access Services
- Presentation to the MDC
- Educational Programming
- Referrals
- Program Follow-Up



Montgomery County Youth Fire Prevention & Intervention Program (PIP)

Immediate Intervention

The Program utilizes the Pennsylvania Child and Parent Juvenile Firesetter Screening Tool. The screening tool is completed by the fire official, family, and youth with assistance from the mobile crisis worker. The mobile crisis worker may also complete a behavioral health assessment.

Assessment

In the event of a fire set by a youth, fire professionals and mobile crisis workers are available to provide immediate and robust safety planning around fire use with the family and engage in crisis stabilization.

Education

The program provides fire safety and wellness education. The education includes fire science, fire safety, fire survival, and general mental wellness. The education is delivered by a team of fire service professionals and behavioral health service providers. There is a service-learning component where youth engage in positive prosocial activities that benefit the community. Youth receive a certificate upon successful completion of the educational component.

For referrals & more information please contact:
Chief William F. Wiegman III, Fire Marshal & Emergency Management Coordinator
Montgomery Township Department of Fire Services
Office: 215-393-6935
Email: wwiegman@montgomerytwp.org

Montgomery County Youth Fire Prevention & Intervention Program

Mission Statement

To address youthful fire-setting behavior within Montgomery County and to reduce the risk of fire-related loss of life, personal injury, and property destruction. The goals and objectives of the program will be accomplished through interventions including education and supportive service through community interventions. The program will provide immediate risk mitigation through the collaborative efforts of fire service professionals, mobile crisis, and the youth and their families.

Statement of Needs

According to an analysis of intentional fires conducted by the National Fire Prevention Association (2007-2011), an estimated 282,600 intentional fires were reported to U.S. fire departments each year, with associated annual losses of 420 civilian deaths, 1,360 civilian injuries, and \$1.3 billion in direct property damage. According to the FBI's *Crime in the United States*, two out of five of the individuals arrested for arson were under 18 years of age.

The misuse of fire has many variables, including age, motivation for fire-setting behavior, type of fire set, ignition materials used to set the fire, and the child's understanding and limitations of fire. Fire-setting behavior is often a symptom of the problem and may be manifested through stress and crisis in children's lives.

Goals

- Provide a safer community by reducing instances of youthful fire-setting behavior that leads to loss of life, injury, and the destruction of property.
- Empower youths and families to lead more resilient lives by reducing systematic gaps through a collaborative relationship with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT).
- Provide assessment, education, and recommendations for support and services
- Collect data on the misuse of fire by youths residing in Montgomery County.

Program Services

Immediate Intervention

In the event of a fire set by a youth, fire professionals and mobile crisis workers will be available to provide immediate and robust safety planning around fire use with the family and engage in crisis stabilization. There will be an on-call schedule provided to the Montgomery County Public Safety Dispatch Center that will allow public safety professionals the ability to access assistance in the event of youthful fire-setting incidents. The fire professional and mobile crisis worker will respond to the fire scene or identified location to meet with the youth and their family to safety plan and make appropriate referrals to other community services if necessary.

Referrals & Assessments

Referrals can be made to the program by interested entities, families, and providers. The Program Coordinator will review and screen all referrals. The referrals will be sent to an identified fire service professional and representative from Access Service Mobile Crisis Unit. An assessment will be scheduled in the youth's home or an agreed-upon meeting place. Family fire safety planning and

parental education will be completed at the time of the assessment. The assessment will be reviewed with members of the MDT to identify and make recommendations and referrals for educational and supportive services. The MDT will work cooperatively with agencies and individuals that work with juvenile populations and foster community partnerships.

Assessment

The Program will utilize the *Pennsylvania Child and Parent Juvenile Firesetter Screening Tool* when conducting assessments. This Screening Tool will be completed by the Fire Official, family, and youth. The Mobile Crisis Worker will assist with the completion of the screening tool and will also complete the required assessment forms for Access Services. The Pennsylvania Screening Tool contains the following information:

Introduction

Referral Form

Authorization to Release Information

Program Release of Liability

Child/Youth Interview

Parent Checklist

Parent Interview

Home Fire Safety Check

Screening Tool Report

Follow-Ups at 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months

Education

The program will provide fire safety and wellness education for referred youths. The education will include several components including fire science, fire safety, fire survival, and general mental wellness. The program provides a comprehensive intervention to youthful fire-setters. The education will be delivered by fire service professionals and behavioral health service providers. There will be a service-learning component where students will engage in positive prosocial activities that benefit the community. Students will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the educational component.

The program will utilize the Burn Prevention Foundation's *A Spark of Knowledge an intervention curriculum* for fire safety education. Access Services will be utilizing a wellness education program for the youths. The Education Program will include PowerPoint presentations, a service-learning project, wellness education, and the distribution of certificates of completion. Fire safety and prevention education will be facilitated by fire service professionals. The wellness program will be facilitated by mental health professionals.

Program Referral Process

Referrals to the program can be received from providers, public safety officials, the courts, schools, parents, and other concerned entities. There are two pathways for referrals, Community and Crisis Referrals.

Community Referrals

Community referrals are for identified youths that are not in crisis and do not require immediate stabilization and/or intervention. These referrals will be received by the Program Coordinator who will then pass the information along to Access Services and the appropriate Fire Official to conduct an assessment with the youth and their family at the home. The appropriate Fire Official will coordinate with the assigned Mobile Crisis Specialist and the family to conduct the interview within thirty days of receiving the referral.

The team will meet with the youth and their family at the home or an agreed-upon meeting place to conduct the intake interview and assessment. The team will safety plan with the family, conduct a home safety check, and provide stabilization and fire safety education to the parents. The team will inform the youth and family of the MDT review process and the potential for participation in the Educational Intervention Program. The team will then present the referral at the next monthly meeting of the MDT. The MDT will review the referral and make the appropriate recommendations including education and ongoing services. The Program Coordinator will then inform the family through phone communication and written notice of the MDT's recommendations. The Program Coordinator will then schedule and coordinate the Education Intervention Program with the family if recommended by the MDT.

Crisis Referral

Crisis referrals are for identified youths that are in crisis and require immediate stabilization and intervention. The referring agency can request an immediate response from the Program through the Montgomery County Public Safety Emergency Communications Center. The dispatch center will contact the Program Coordinator who will then notify Mobile Crisis and the appropriate Fire Official of the request to respond to the fire scene.

Once on scene, the team will meet with the youth and their family. The team will then conduct an assessment and engage in safety planning with the family. A home safety check will be conducted if appropriate. The team will provide for the stabilization of the youth and family. Mobile Crisis will work with the family to address any immediate needs of the youth and family. The Fire Official will then send a referral to the Program Coordinator to begin the Community Referral Process with the youth and their family.

Members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Multi-Disciplinary Team will consist of members from the fire service, Access Services mobile crisis team, community-based service providers, school social workers, and representatives from Juvenile Court, Office of Mental Health, and Office of Children and Youth. Members of the fire service shall include fire marshals, chief fire officers, and fire service members that have completed the NFA Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist Training. The MDT will be comprised of a robust membership that

spans public safety, mental health, social services, community-based services, and county agencies. The members of the MDT will be approved by the Team's Board of Directors.

The MDT will meet monthly to review referrals and discuss the business of the MDT. The MDT will meet to review referrals and make recommendations for interventions. These interventions could include education, social or mental health services, and various community supports for the youth and the family. The recommendations of the MDT will be provided to the family by the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will also provide follow-up information for referrals that have successfully completed the education component of the program.

Board of Directors

The Montgomery County Youth Fire Prevention & Intervention Program MDT will appoint a Board of Directors to assist in the development of a county-wide MDT. The Board of Directors will consist of the following members of the board:

President	Program Coordinator	Juvenile Probation
Vice-President	Access Services Rep	Office of Children and Youth
Treasurer	Mental Health Advisor	Office of Mental Health
Secretary	Education Coordinator	

The Board of Directors should strive to have the program registered as a 501 c 3 Non-Profit Entity. The Board of Directors will also serve on the MDT. The Board will ensure the integrity and fidelity of the program. The Board of Directors shall ensure that the referral process, assessments, MDT, and educational component are operating to the highest standards. The Board is also responsible for scheduling ongoing training and professional development of the MDT. The members of the Board will be appointed by the MDT every two years.

Quality Insurance and Program Fidelity

Quality of service delivery

- Routine review of curriculum to ensure up-to-date information is being delivered
- Provide training at pre-determined times for trainers to ensure fidelity of delivery of information.
- Provide train-the-trainer workshops for new professionals as the program expands

Amount of service

- Monitor duration for quality and acceptance of program guidelines
- Continue professional relationships to increase the service to the youth and family

Data Collection

- Collect data on youth and service delivery to ensure proper delivery
- Collect data on trends to further education and outreach in higher-risk areas
- Examine data to show strengths and areas of improvement for the program



Montgomery County Youth Fire Prevention & Intervention Program (PIP)

Immediate Intervention

The Program utilizes the Pennsylvania Child and Parent Juvenile Firesetter Screening Tool. The screening tool is completed by the fire official, family, and youth with assistance from the mobile crisis worker. The mobile crisis worker may also complete a behavioral health assessment.

Assessment

In the event of a fire set by a youth, fire professionals and mobile crisis workers are available to provide immediate and robust safety planning around fire use with the family and engage in crisis stabilization.

Education

The program provides fire safety and wellness education. The education includes fire science, fire safety, fire survival, and general mental wellness. The education is delivered by a team of fire service professionals and behavioral health service providers. There is a service-learning component where youth engage in positive prosocial activities that benefit the community. Youth receive a certificate upon successful completion of the educational component.

For referrals & more information please contact:
Chief William F. Wiegman III, Fire Marshal & Emergency Management Coordinator
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