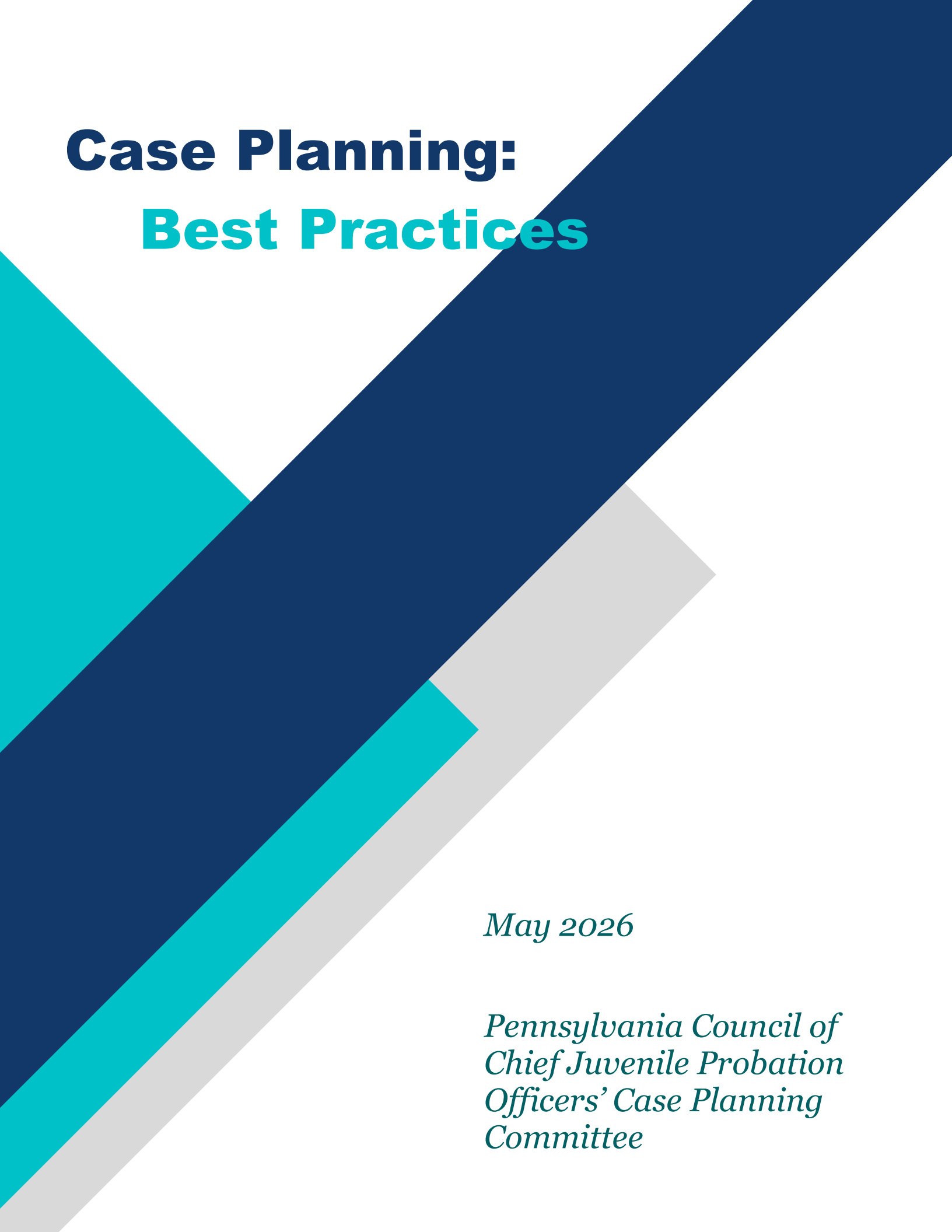




Case Planning: Best Practices

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*Pennsylvania Council of
Chief Juvenile Probation
Officers' Case Planning
Committee*

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A. Case Plan Coordinators/Coaches

- 1. Selection of Coordinators** - Each juvenile probation department should designate a case planning coordinator(s). Larger departments should consider additional Case Planning Coordinators proportional to the size and needs of their department. Standards and general expectations for selecting a case planning coordinator can be found in the Pennsylvania Youth Level of Service (YLS) Master Trainer and Case Planning Coordinator Responsibilities and Expectations Chiefs' Council Assessment Committee and Case Planning Committee Responsibilities and Expectations document located on the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO) or the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) website.
- 2. Initial Training** - Case Planning Coordinators should be responsible for the initial case planning training for the department or departments with partnership agreements via the Juvenile Probation Services Grant Program. If a Case Planning Coordinator is not available, the department should reach out to the PCCJPO's Case Planning Committee to supplement any training needs. The materials for this initial training can be accessed through the Case Planning Committee.
- 3. Case Plan Reviews** - Case Planning Coordinators should be responsible for reviewing case plans for officers over the course of the year (frequency to be determined by policy). Case planning reviews can be completed through the evaluation of a youth's case plan and/or the direct observation of the case planning process with a probation officer and youth/family. During these reviews, the Case Plan Review Checklist, or any checklist that incorporates all key case planning elements, should be used to evaluate and score the case plan and case planning process. After the checklist/scoring is completed, the results should be reviewed with the assigned probation officer. Probation officers are expected to work towards achieving a minimum proficiency level of 80% on their case plan reviews.
- 4. Booster Training** - The PCCJPO Case Planning Committee will disseminate an approved case planning booster twice a year. This booster will include a completed YLS and case plan, along with instructions on how to run the booster session. Additional boosters can be developed by departments and should be developed for any case planning needs as discovered through the case planning review process. The department may develop boosters around other key elements of case planning, such as collaboration with the youth and family, service provider involvement, and the incorporation of other Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy initiatives (JJSES).
- 5. Case Planning Coordinator User Group Conference Calls** - Case Planning Coordinator user group learning community trainings are organized by the PCCJPO Case Planning

Committee to facilitate mini training sessions and share information, updates, successes, and challenges. The frequency of the learning community trainings is generally established twice per year but can change based on the needs of the departments and additional case planning activities throughout the year.

6. **Case Planning Coordinator Certifications and Recertifications** - Case Planning Coordinators are required to take part in a one-day training course specific to the case planning process. The certifications/recertifications will be held in alternate years from the YLS Master Trainer Recertification. This training should serve as a forum to ensure fidelity to the fundamentals of case planning and discuss/share ideas concerning practices and policies. All Case Planning Coordinators will be required to complete a standardized case plan to demonstrate proficiency and adherence to best practices regarding case planning.

B. Before Case Planning

1. **Who Gets a Case Plan** - Level of risk should be the main deciding factor in determining who should get a case plan. All youth who receive an overall moderate, high, or very high-risk level on the YLS should have a case plan completed. The focus should be on the prioritized 1-3 criminogenic needs identified in the YLS.
2. **“Special Cases”** - There are several instances where case planning can look different depending on the following factors:
 - a. **Low Risk** - While it is not recommended to initiate the case planning process with youth who score low risk on the YLS, a case-by-case determination can be made if there is a domain that scores high where the case planning process could assist the youth and family.
 - b. **Consent Decree** - Youth who are placed on a Consent Decree may create special circumstances due to the length of time on supervision. The length of a Consent Decree provides ample time to establish a case plan concentrating on the youth’s prioritized 1-3 criminogenic need(s). Engaging the youth and family to develop a goal(s), accompanied by time-bound activities, should provide the youth with a guide for focused progress during the Consent Decree.
 - c. **Sexual Offenders** - In many cases, sex offenders may score a low risk on the YLS. The use of a psychosexual evaluation and specific assessment tools for sexual offenses will determine the risk of the youth’s likelihood of reoffending sexually. This information will be incorporated into the development of a specific treatment plan for the needs of the youth. Based on the YLS score, the department will need

to determine if a case plan is needed to address the needs identified within the YLS assessment. Each youth will have to be evaluated individually to determine if the case planning process is also necessary.

- d. Placement** - Youth who have been ordered to a placement will have a treatment plan that is developed surrounding the youth's areas of need. Given the intense nature of the treatment services and the number of services provided, the case plan is not recommended.
- e. Community-Based Services** - Youth who have been ordered to complete a community-based service will have a treatment plan that is developed around the youth's areas of need. The case planning process can be used to create activities that reinforce the skills and interventions utilized through the provider. With some providers, it may not be necessary to create a case plan while the youth is engaged in the service. The department will need to evaluate case by case and service by service level if/when the case planning process is appropriate.
- f. Courtesy Supervision** - When courtesy supervision has been requested, it is recommended that both departments collaborate to determine the best way to move forward with the case planning process. Given the case planning process could be at various stages when courtesy supervision is requested, collaboration is critical in determining the best ways to support the youth and family.
- g. Inter-State Cases** – A case plan should be completed if a department's YLS assessment policy states that the assessment should be completed for inter-state cases. If a risk/need assessment is not completed, it is not recommended the inter-state case participates in the case planning process.

- 3. Goal Setting** - Goal setting is an important process as it relates to the development of an effective case plan. Goal setting should happen prior to the finalizing of the initial case plan with the youth and family. For counties that are trained in Effective Practices In Community Supervision (EPICS), the goal-setting worksheet should be used during a session as outlined with the model. For those counties that are not trained in EPICS, the goal-setting worksheet can still be incorporated during a conversation with the youth and family concerning their goals.

C. Case Planning

1. **Top Four Areas of Need** - When determining the single most prioritized criminogenic need domain, refer to the 'Top Four,' as these criminogenic domain needs are more likely to contribute to recidivism. The case planning process should include evaluating the YLS score, responsivity factors, and other information available through assessments completed when determining the needs to be addressed through case planning. The probation officer should be evaluating the top four domain needs before any other domains. The top four criminogenic needs are as follows:

- **Attitudes/Orientation** (Antisocial Cognition)
- **Personality/Behavior** (Antisocial Personality)
- **Peer Relations** (Antisocial Associates)
- **Family Circumstances/Parenting** (Family/Marital)

2. **Driver** - Identifying the driving behavior is an important step in the case planning process. Successfully identifying and addressing the driver may result in addressing several areas of need that the youth exhibits. Most of the time, the driving behavior is associated with one of the top four areas of need.
3. **Skill Deficits** - Criminogenic needs are broad and may include several different skill deficits/development areas of focus. Identify specific skill deficits that contribute to the problem behavior. Establish activities that will model, teach, and reinforce the new desired skill. To determine the skill deficit, ask "What skill could the youth be needing in order to achieve this goal and to reduce the chance of further delinquent behavior?" or "What possible skill could the youth learn in order to achieve this goal?". Below are a few examples of skill deficits/development areas.

- **Problem-solving**
- **Decision-making**
- **Controlling Emotions**
- **Avoiding Trouble**
- **Reducing Impulsivity**
- **Group/Peer Pressure**
- **Communication**
- **Anger Control**

4. **Stages of Change** - When a person begins their journey towards change, they move through a series of five stages (Pre-Contemplative, Contemplative, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance). The stages of change are often portrayed in a circular manner because an individual can move back and forth between the stages as the change occurs. It is important to consider a youth's current place in the Stages of Change model

when selecting interventions to address the needs that have been identified. A youth's place in the Stages of Change model can have an impact on the success of the applied intervention(s).

- 5. Responsivity Factors** - The case plan should also consider responsivity factors when developing the youth's activities. The following examples of responsivity factors must be considered in the development of the case plan to enhance the youth's ability to succeed:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| • Mental Health | • Victim of Bullying | • Learning Style | • Motivation |
| • Engages in Denial | • Witness of Abuse | • Developmental Age | • Trauma |
| • Intellectual Disabilities | • Culture/Ethnic Issues | • Gender Considerations | • Manipulation |

Please note that these are only a few examples and not an exhaustive list. There is a full list provided on the YLS 2.0 in the responsivity section.

- 6. SMART Goals** - Once an area of need is identified that is going to be addressed through case planning, an overall goal should be developed with the youth and family. The case planning activities should follow the SMART guidelines.

S pecific	Activities identified in the case plan are specific so there is no question as to what is being described.
M easurable	Activities identified in the case plan are measurable so it can be determined when they are completed or when progress is being made.
A chievable	Activities identified in the case plan are achievable for the youth given their stage of change, strengths, responsivity factors, physical, emotional, and intellectual capabilities, and family/social supports.
R ealistic	Activities identified in the case plan are realistic for the youth given where they are at the moment (e.g., their motivation, available time, priorities, and situation).
T ime-bound	Activities are timebound, with an identified due date or time frame required for completion.

- 7. Family Involvement** - Family involvement is critical to the success of the case planning process. Each department's policy and practice should include the requirement of family involvement activities for the development of the case plan. Activities that should have family involvement include the sharing of YLS assessment results, the goal-

setting worksheet, the development of goals and activities, and monthly reviews of the case planning progress. Allowing the family and youth to create their own goal is an essential way to include the voice of the youth and family while enhancing professional alliance.

8. **Strength Based** - The case plan should build upon the strengths of the youth to reduce their likelihood of recidivism while supporting their behavior change.
9. **Graduated Responses** - Graduated response systems provide empirically based strategies to influence a youth's behavior. When properly administered, graduated response systems offer effective methods to promote and reinforce near-term achievement of goals identified in the case plan. Responses should be incremental, proportionate, and predictable to encourage desired behaviors and to discourage undesired behaviors of youth under probation supervision.
10. **Documentation** - Original case plans should be saved and stored somewhere that is accessible for the department (e.g., PaJCMS, local drive, internal file). This will help with the supervisor review process as well as assist case plan coordinators in doing case plan pulls. As a case plan is updated, this document can be kept by the probation officer to review at each meeting until the case plan has been fully completed.

D. After Case Planning

1. **Review of the Case Plan** - The case plan should be reviewed with the youth at least monthly. It is suggested this review take place during a scheduled, structured session. Reviewing the case plan gives the probation officer opportunities to work on skill practice and create teachable moments. Once an activity is completed, the next activity can be developed/started. At minimum, the case plan is reviewed with the family every time a goal is added or updated. The purpose of this review is to promote and encourage family engagement and commitment. If the youth's YLS score changes or there is a life-changing event, the case plan should be reviewed with the youth and family members prior to further progress.
2. **New Need Areas Addressed** - A case plan is typically ready to be closed out when all activities have been completed. The activities established during the youth's supervision should have been based on criminogenic needs and skill deficits, which should result in a youth's overall risk level decreasing and likewise their need for new goals and activities. If there are still areas of need or skill deficits that need to be addressed, the process of case planning should be repeated with a new goal in mind.

3. **Final Case Plan** - Once a youth has completed all the activities on their case plan and there are no additional areas of need to be addressed, the final version of the case plan should be saved and stored somewhere that is accessible for the department (e.g., PaJCMS, local drive, internal file).

E. CQI

1. **Data Collection** - Case planning coordinators should review case plans as per their departmental policy. Ideally, these reviews should be conducted using the Case Plan Review Checklist, which can be found within the Case Planning Coaches' Guide. The reviewer should be looking to determine:
 - 1) If the initial case plan was developed in accordance with policy
 - 2) If there was stakeholder collaboration seen in the development and over time
 - 3) If the proper criminogenic needs, based on the most recent YLS assessment, were addressed
 - 4) If the goals, interventions, activities, and services pair with the identified needs and skill deficits
 - 5) If the probation officer regularly updated/modified the case plan based upon the youth's progress or lack thereof, in addition to other items that can be found on the Case Plan Review Checklist.
2. **Using the Data** - Case planning quality assurance data should be analyzed and tracked to look for patterns where individual staff and/or larger groups are struggling with their case planning skills. Case planning coordinators should use the data collected to better determine the training needs of the department when conducting booster and remedial trainings.

F. Resources

- Case Planning Best Practice Recommendations Document
- YLS & Case Planning Bench Cards
- Case Planning Handbook
- Case Planning Coaches' Guide
- Booster Cases
- Carey Group Publishing's Supervisor's EBP BriefCASE
- Examples of Case Planning Policies: Available from Regional Case Planning Coordinators
- Carey Group Publishing's Case Planning Carey Guide
- The Field-Based Case Plan
- PowerPoint from Case Planning Training
- Case Planning Coordinator Contact List