

Welcome to *E-YASI*, an electronic newsletter from the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA), written specifically for YASI users and policymakers.

E-YASI is distributed by the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives and funded through a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. *E-YASI* is also available on the Probation Services Suite of *eJusticeNY*.



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Issue Number 5; October 2007

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1. The Importance and Benefits of YASI Reassessment

Rule and good probation practice require periodic measurement of a juvenile's progress over time toward achievement of identified case plan outcomes, and updating the case plan in accordance with the reassessment results. Additionally, it is important to complete a reassessment of the juvenile at case closure to fully assess the impact of probation's intervention toward reducing the future risk of recidivism. For juvenile cases, the YASI Reassessment and updated case plans satisfy the DPCA Rule periodic supervision report requirements.

Why use the YASI Youth Score Summary (YSS)?

The YSS offers a quantifiable view of progress within each YASI domain. It is useful in providing feedback to the youth, their family, and the probation officer regarding progress during the period, and to clarify the focus for the next supervision period. The YSS offers probation supervisors easy access and insight into progress of individual cases. Aggregate data is available to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions or services reducing the identified risk factors.

Thirty-nine counties reported in their 2007 Annual Program Plan that they are increasing their YASI reassessments this year. Juvenile Probation Supervisor John Adams from the Warren County Probation Department reports that the YASI Youth Score Summaries and the aggregate data readily obtained from the YASI quick reports assists him to ensure timeliness of quarterly reports, to develop policies that can increase the overall effectiveness of probation and community services, and to assess the need for specific services within the county.

2. Use of YASI PDI software reduces Family Court processing time

In Albany County, use of the YASI PDI function has contributed significantly to reduced family court case processing time. Use of the YASI Full Assessment information is used to create a draft PDI which is then individualized for each youth and family. Other efficiencies to reduce family court case processing time include Probation Officers working in the schools; a new family court position to reduce failures to appear by providing reminders of upcoming court dates; and psychologists at family court to provide on-site mental health assessments and serve as a liaison with probation. Doug Porte, Albany County Probation's Deputy Director, indicated that these efficiencies have cut the time needed to complete a PDI in Albany County from an average of 4 weeks to an average of 3 weeks.

3. Quality Assurance (QA)

While a number of counties are in the process of developing or improving their YASI quality assurance, Dutchess County has led the way with their Quality Assurance Team meetings since 2003. Some of the quality assurance issues addressed recently include creation of an in-house YASI Training Video, with Probation Supervisor Nick Ignaffo in the lead role as PO. QA meetings are focused on building probation officer motivational interviewing skills; reviewing and interpreting specific YASI assessment items (inter-rater reliability); evaluation of case closing outcomes and impact of available interventions; reviewing of Youth Score Summaries to assess progress toward reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors; and ongoing departmental and related agency YASI training needs. Deputy Director Cathy Lane sends out meeting minutes. If you would like to receive these minutes, which offer great insight into the QA work being done and pitfalls to avoid, please contact Patti Donohue at either 518-485-5158 or Patricia.Donohue@DPCA.state.ny.us.

4. Announcing availability of the YASI Detention Screen

On August 14, 2007 DPCA provided to all Detention Administrators in New York State the YASI Detention Screening Tool and invited agencies to participate in a statewide effort to implement and validate the YASI Detention Screen. The tool is offered at no-cost to interested agencies.

The YASI Detention Screen is an 11 item tool developed and customized for NYS as a component of the existing YASI assessment battery. It was assembled after review of existing detention screening devices used in other jurisdictions to assess for risk of flight and imminent risk of serious re-offending. Major components of the YASI

Detention Screen include previous failures of supervision, failure to appear in court, serious violent offending, and the number of outstanding matters. While the YASI Detention Screen should not be used as the sole determinate in recommendations to the family court, users will find it useful in guiding detention decisions.

For further information regarding the YASI Detention Screen, please contact Norma Tyler, Community Corrections Representative III at either 518-485-5153 or Norma.Tyler@DPCA.state.ny.us.

5. YASI Training Update for 2007 and 2008

For 2008, the YASI Directors Data Workshops have been scheduled for January 22 in Newburgh, January 23 in Albany, and January 24 in Canandaigua. The YASI Probation Supervisors trainings have been scheduled for February 28 in Canandaigua and February 29 in Albany. A Save the Date email was sent on August 24, 2007. As soon as specific sites have been secured, a follow up announcement will be emailed.

To date, 5 of the 8 YASI trainings scheduled for 2007 have been completed. When all trainings are completed in December, Orbis Partners and DPCA will have trained over 150 staff from probation and related fields in use of the YASI tool this year.

Also completed is the first of two scheduled YASI 2-day Training for Trainers sessions. The 10 Trainers hail from Ontario, Nassau, Orange, Schenectady, Dutchess, Albany, Oswego, Monroe, and Niagara counties. The T4T protocol involves 4 steps: observation of the YASI Initial and Follow Up trainings, two 2 day T4T sessions, submission of an interview sample for skill assessment, and training a real YASI class that is observed by a mentor.

Remaining trainings for 2007 include an Albany Follow-Up session on 11/8-9; a Goshen Follow-Up session on 12/3-4; and a Canandaigua Follow-Up session on 12/5-6.

6. Announcement of Upcoming Data Drop

An announcement and instructions for counties to submit their data to Orbis Partners will be emailed in the near future.

E-YASI is distributed by the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) and funded through a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). If you have any questions or comments regarding the YASI project or E-YASI, please contact Patricia Donohue, Community Corrections Representative 2 at 518-485-5158 or email her at Patricia.Donohue@DPCA.state.ny.us.

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