

Youth Competency Assessment/Strengths Project
Summary of Findings
NPC Research, Inc.

The Youth Competency Assessment and its strengths-based approach for assessing youth was piloted in the juvenile justice system by three Oregon counties in 2002-2003. Research in the project resulted in the following findings:

- ☆ Helps gather more and different information
- ☆ Helps youth and family feel more comfortable, share more, and buy into process
(motivates change)
- ☆ Helps identify ideas and resources
- ☆ Makes follow-up appointments more enjoyable
- ☆ Seems to facilitate quicker completion of court requirements
- ☆ Pilot youth rate first few meetings with Department as more positive than comparison youth
- ☆ Pilot youth were more likely to say counselor cared about their point of view
- ☆ Pilot youth were more than twice as likely to report that counselor asked about strengths
- ☆ Pilot youth were less likely to report that their counselor talked about what they did wrong
- ☆ Pilot youth were less likely to believe they would be treated differently by counselor
(not based on gender or race, but other characteristics)
- ☆ Parents of pilot youth were more likely to believe child would have been treated differently by race and less likely for other reasons
- ☆ Almost all pilot youth and parents felt counselor was helpful and fair

- ☆ Parents more likely than youth to feel counselor was sensitive to family's culture
- ☆ YCA videotapes were significantly higher on strengths-based practice
- ☆ YCA videotapes were not significantly different on cultural competence
- ☆ YCA videotapes were significantly more positive on non-verbal cues and interview atmosphere
- ☆ Almost half of key stakeholders (Jan – Apr '03) reported seeing change or impact they attributed to project and that it has affected them or their work (positively) (40% of those said they saw impact on the youth)
- ☆ Use of the YCA substantially increased the amount of information about the 3 domains
- ☆ Comparison site was better at using strengths (or recording them) in their case plans, though still pilot site plans were more likely to have information about healthy identity and connections (comparison had more on repairing harm)
- ☆ Pilot case plans were more likely to have balance of strengths and accountability goals
- ☆ Pilot cases seems to be shorter (youth were in service fewer days than comparison youth)
- ☆ 87% of closing reports from pilot sites reported YCA affected the case
- ☆ Comparison sites more likely to report youth developed a new competency
- ☆ Pilot sites more likely to build on existing competency
- ☆ Youth rated at completion as having no change or worsened was the same proportion in pilot and comparison counties