

YSB'S YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

Every young person has the potential to make good choices—and sometimes those choices lead to conflict with the law. For many youth at risk, being faced with a charge and an unfamiliar legal system is a turning point that can lead to either greater risk or an opportunity to make positive changes.

Working with a number of community partners, the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) provides support to youth aged 12 to 20 in the justice system with programs that promote positive behavioural change.

REHABILITATION: FACILITIES GEARED TO YOUTH

YSB helps youth by providing facilities that are geared for young offenders aged 12 to 17. Innovative programming and counselling are offered at two residential facilities: the William E. Hay Centre, which expanded from 24 to 40 beds in March 2009, and the Livius Sherwood Observation and Detention Centre.



Both centres provide pre- and post-trial detention. Life skills training and educational options—from social skills to high school credit courses, from drug awareness to vocational courses—provide youth with the practical skills and knowledge needed in everyday life. The program gives youth the incentive to get their lives back on track.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

YSB works with youth to understand and address the links between anger and action, which can sometimes lead to conflict with the law. The program has four steps: recognizing, understanding, and managing anger; developing alternative patterns; learning self control; and problem solving. The program helps youth to develop new skills and re-build self-esteem.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental illness is a reality faced by many young offenders. The Youth Mental Health Court Worker program aims to identify and recommend alternatives for youth whose primary issues are related to mental health, not criminal behavior.

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The program also helps youth who need psychiatric assessments or referrals to community health services, and provides information and support to family members of mentally ill youth.

COMMUNITY RE-INTEGRATION

The goal of the Community Re-integration program is to reduce recidivism by addressing underlying causes. Through counselling, youth in custody can begin to recognize the connections between behaviour and consequence. If they are able to observe their own behaviour and understand how they got to where they are, they are better equipped to build healthy relationships with others and focus on the future.

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