

The FGIRJC Youth Services Team provides support for youth and families that ranges from preventative to reparative. Services are designed and delivered to support participants at all levels of risk from preventing youth from having juvenile justice involvement, to supporting them in growing through navigating court and community supervision and exiting justice involvement in a better place than when trouble started.

The Youth Services Department is comprised of following programs:

Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ)

The Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) program is a collaborative effort with Vermont's Department for Children and Families that seeks to provide support to young people who are at risk of criminal justice involvement or currently involved with the juvenile justice system. The program provides risk screening, skills programming, 1-on-1 support, restorative processes and restitution services. The BARJ program engages with youth at all points of juvenile justice involvement, from preventative work, through court involvement and community supervision, to completion of reparative work and moving forward as positive members of the community.

Juvenile Court Diversion

FGIRJC joins with youth, families, victims and the community to provide restorative responses to Franklin and Grand Isle Family Court cases that are referred to Juvenile Court Diversion. FGIRJC staff work with young people who have engaged in harmful behavior to support them in taking accountability and addressing the impact of their actions. Youth and their families collaborate with staff, victims and community members through Restorative Panel and Restorative Circle processes to develop consensus on how to effectively repair damage and move forward in a positive manner.

Youth Substance Awareness and Safety Program

FGIRJC provides youth who are cited for cannabis and alcohol possession or distribution with opportunities to evaluate their current use and needs for support through this civil diversion program. Participants' needs related to substance use are explored through engagement with staff and completion of a screening. Resources are provided based on the results of that process and can include completion of further substance use evaluation, onsite skills programming or referral to other FGIRJC programming. If participants choose not to participate or do not complete the requirements, their citations are removed from the Youth Substance Awareness and Safety Program diversion process and issued to the Vermont Judicial Bureau.

Services Offered:

Risk Screening:

FGIRJC's BARJ program administers the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) prescreen. This tool is used to better understand whether youth are at risk for further involvement in the juvenile justice system and what aspects of a youth's life might be contributing that risk. The YASI prescreen is sometimes used when young people have law enforcement contact to guide decisions related to how the incident should be handled. The tool can also be used to better understand a young person's needs even if they have not had any law enforcement contact. The process of completing a YASI generally includes a meeting with

the youth and family, as well conversations with collateral contacts from school, law enforcement, loved ones, family friends and others who might know the young person well.

Skills Sessions:

FGIRJC's BARJ program engages youth in sessions designed to build skill and awareness related to: self-regulation, accountability, goal-setting and change, healthy relationships and positive masculinity, mindfulness, regulated driving, financial literacy and workforce development. These sessions have been developed around the interventions shown to be effective with youth who are at-risk of or currently involved with the criminal justice system, using Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and adolescent brain development as core building blocks for discussions and activities that build skills related to managing risk, setting and achieving goals, as well as finding and engaging with healthy activities, relationships and supports.

Restorative Processes:

FGIRJC engages youth and families in Restorative Processes through its Juvenile Court Diversion and BARJ programs.

Restorative Panel - FGIRJC collaborate with a young person responsible for harm, a panel of community volunteers and participating victims to repair harm and move forward in a more positive manner.

Restorative Circle - FGIRJC staff, the young person and victims utilize a Restorative Circle framework, in which all parties gather together to share experiences and ideas for moving forward. The group agrees on a plan for repair of harm and then reconvenes to review progress and determine whether the circle can be closed.

Ongoing 1-on-1 Support

FGIRJC's BARJ program works individually with youth and families to:

- Formulate and pursue goals
- Understand and manage behavior
- Repair harm and rebuild relationships
- Connect with nature and other prosocial activities
- Navigate challenges at home, in school and in the community
- Connect with peers in positive settings
- Successfully navigate juvenile justice involvement

FGIRJC Skills Sessions

Driving My Mind and Body

Purpose: Driving My Mind and Body engages youth in conversations and hands-on work to build skill in identifying, exploring and managing emotion and behavior.

Overview: Driving My Mind and Body is a skill-building tool that is typically facilitated over 2-5 sessions, while providing exercises that can be incorporated as recurring elements of ongoing client work. The work begins by inviting participants to explore the range and intensity of emotions they experience in different situations. The session then builds on this initial work to explore what emotional and physical feelings they associate with situations in which they lose control. From here the discussion looks at the connection between strong feelings and intense situations in the context of brain function, including the specific challenges and opportunities associated with the teenage brain and exposure to traumatic experiences. The work then shifts to exploration of the connection between thoughts, feelings, actions and consequences, particularly in difficult situations. The behavior chain, “stop and think” and “thinking check-in” tools are used to deconstruct stressful situations and help participants gain insight into how they can empower themselves through recognition of risky thoughts and feelings and how they connect to consequences that they would rather avoid in the future. Lesson on social skills lessons that can be useful in difficult situations follow. The facilitator and client are then invited to incorporate the behavior chain, “stop and think” and “thinking-check-in” tools in ongoing work to build skill in recognizing risk and bringing new thinking to difficult situations to empower youth to achieve outcomes that register as more successful.

Owning My Decisions

Purpose: Owning My Decisions engages youth in conversation and work related to motivation and change with the goal of locating ownership in past and future actions and empowering change capacity.

Overview: Owning My Decisions is a skill-building tool typically facilitated over 1-2 sessions. Like other FGIRJC BARJ skills classes, the specific tools shared in the Owning My Decisions, the “Stages of Change” or Transtheoretical Model of Change framework and the Decisional Balance tool, can be utilized in ongoing casework with youth. The discussion starts by engaging youth in a conversation around a change that they might seek in their lives, then contextualizes change within adolescent brain development. Participants are then introduced to each stage in the Stages of Change model. Throughout the conversation, participants have the opportunity to think and talk through a potential change. After completing reviews of the Stages of Change, participants are introduced to the Decisional Balance tool and have an opportunity to utilize that in conducting a cost/benefit analysis of their potential behavior change.

Making Change Real

Purpose: Making Change Real builds on the work with youth around change processes and decision-making that happened through the previous skills session, Owning My Decisions. This session provides participants with specific goal-setting strategies and opportunities to try them out.

Overview: Making Change Real is a skill-building class facilitated over 1-3 sessions. As in Driving My Mind and Body and Owning My Decisions, the tools shared in Making Change Real (“Stages of Change”, the Decisional Balance tool, S.M.A.R.T. Goal-Setting and W.O.O.P) can be utilized in ongoing casework with youth. The session begins with an exploration of how ideas

about change can grow into changes that the world can see and feel, providing participants with opportunities to name and process barriers to change that they have experienced. The session closes with an emphasis on the importance of setting and reaching incremental goals to build change momentum through strengthening confidence around capacity to change, which the conversation connects to the broader concept of self-efficacy or “an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments”. (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997)

TRUE

Purpose: TRUE is designed to build on the work of companion FGIRJC skills sessions, Driving My Mind and Body, Owning My Decisions and Making Change Real. TRUE brings together ideas from all of these classes and engages youth in discussions and visioning around who they want to be in the world and how they can set the stage for that to happen.

Overview: TRUE is a skill-building class facilitated over 2-4 sessions. The class invites participants to begin by coming up with a “working definition” of themselves. What is it that makes them unique and exceptional? Holding this idea, the discussion turns to situations where they and those around them have seen them at their very best and, well, the opposite. Through exploring how those moments sounded, looked and felt for everyone present in that moment, participating youth are encouraged to gain insight into how they impact the world, both when they are being “true” to the working definition of themselves developed at the beginning of the class and showing up as someone else. The class then explores how our history, the situations we find ourselves in, the interpersonal dynamics that we navigate and people we choose to be supported by can all contribute to whether we show up as a person we feel is the best representation of who we are and strive to be. The class features three concrete strategies for “pressing pause” when participants feel themselves getting away from who they want to be: reengaging with breath, stopping moving and speaking for 10 seconds and identifying feelings. Restorative strategies for restoring harm are also explored.

Building Mindfulness

Purpose: Building Mindfulness provides participants with an introduction to the concept of mindfulness and provides opportunities to explore it's application to challenging moments in their lives.

Overview: This class begins with looking at three key aspects of mindfulness: acceptance, paying attention and living in the moment. The class also looks at what constitutes mindfulness practice - and what doesn't. Before further exploring applications of mindfulness, the session engages participants in a discussion of what drives stress and tension in their lives. Then, several mindfulness-oriented coping strategies are explored. Participants are then given an opportunity to pair triggers with mindfulness applications. The session concludes with an interactive activity, 'Mindfulness Jenga', which uses the classic table game, Jenga, as a way of exploring mindfulness-based activities: when each piece is removed, the facilitator and participant discuss the concept/activity/coping strategy on the block.

Other FGIRJC Skills Offerings: Internet Safety, Healthy Relationships (Live Respect), Driving with My Full Brain, Financial Literacy and Finding a Job and Building a Career