



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Happy Holidays!

December 16, 2014



Dear Staff:

Happy holidays! At this time of year, I am especially grateful for all that you do to support our youth. I love the important reminder painted in the entry of Cuyahoga Hills JCF: "We treat all youth as if they were our own." Sincerest thanks for treating the young people in our care as if they were your own sons and daughters.

As a reminder, youth are sometimes more likely to experience sadness, frustration and anger this time of year, especially if there is infrequent contact with family members. We typically see an increase in self-injurious behaviors in youth during the months of December and January.

Please be observant of any changes in the usual behaviors and attitudes of youth. Examples of situations that warrant referrals to behavioral health staff include the following:

- A normally talkative youth becomes distant
- A calm youth becomes easily angered or agitated
- A sociable youth begins to withdraw
- A youth begins to give away personal items

Youth should be closely observed during and following visits with family. Stress on the visiting family members and the youth who will remain at the facility can lead to strained interactions. Remember to continue to make our visitors feel welcome. Watch youth to ensure that frustrations are handled appropriately. Likewise, parole staff should be mindful to family dynamics throughout the holiday season.

For those staff who work on the holidays, I thank you for making the season special for our youth while fulfilling your work responsibilities. I also thank your families and loved ones for supporting the important work you do every day, but especially during the holiday season.

Wishing you and your family all the best in the New Year!