



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Raising Youth Expectations with PRIDE

January 20, 2017



PRIDE training for trainers was held this week at Cuyahoga Hills JCF

I am excited to announce our new behavior management system called PRIDE: Positive Response Incentive Driven Environment. The new approach raises the bar for how youth behave in the facilities as well as expectations for participation in education, treatment and programming. This level system is designed to increase appropriate behavior, promote programming involvement, foster youths' self-management, and help develop personal responsibility.

How Does PRIDE Work?

One of the foremost advances in behavior management of adolescents is the emphasis on proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate youth behaviors to create positive environments. PRIDE provides a framework for managing behavior as youth access more privileges as they demonstrate increased behavioral control and participation in treatment and programming.

There are specific criteria for advancement, as well as the decline, to the level earned by youth. A petition process will be available to youth to demonstrate how they are meeting both behavior and programming requirements. Petitions will be presented to the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT). In addition, the IDT will consider lowering a youth's PRIDE level when it is apparent that a youth is not maintaining the requirements of his current level. Further, it is important to note that if a youth commits an act of violence, he will automatically be placed at the lowest PRIDE level.

It is intended that youth who proceed through the levels are better able to self-manage, capable of handling more responsibility, demonstrate commitment to programming, and therefore enjoy greater privileges and independence.

Why is PRIDE Important?

Perhaps you are thinking, "Why should we have to incentivize youth to be good? They already know what they are supposed to do. Why can't we just expect good behavior?"

Certainly we will continue to address misbehavior in a timely, predictable, and consistent manner through Youth Behavior Incident Reports (YBIRs), Intervention Hearings, and appropriate sanctions, such as a restorative justice assignment. However, research has shown that the implementation of sanctions, especially when used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive behavior and programming participation is an important step of a youth's habilitation and preparation for adulthood. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding youth for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of PRIDE is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior and programming participation is the norm.

"PRIDE really helps youth to prepare to go home," said Shannon Komisarek, Bureau Chief of Unit Management. "It's not just about being good at the facility. This is thinking about their long-term."



Youth begin at orientation

How Can I Learn More?

Trainers from each facility participated in PRIDE training this week. Staff at the facilities will be trained throughout February and into early March. Central office staff will be encouraged to participate during one of the 8-hours trainings offered at the facilities. Additional training opportunities for any staff not able to be trained in February or March, as well as parole staff, will be announced. Youth will be trained in March, and by April, youth will begin their PRIDE levels. For questions regarding PRIDE trainings, please contact Art James, Program Administrator at the Training Academy, at Arthur.James@dys.ohio.gov or 614-877-7085.

For any questions regarding PRIDE, please contact a facility Unit Management Administrator or Shannon Komisarek, Bureau Chief of Unit Management, at Shannon.Komisarek@dys.ohio.gov or 614-466-7516.