



GROWTH-FOCUSED YOUTH JUSTICE CASE MANAGEMENT GUIDEBOOK

Jonathan I. Cloud | Jodi Martin



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THIS PUBLICATION WAS AUTHORED BY:

Jonathan I. Cloud, Developer
Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management

Jodi Martin, Deputy Executive Director
Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center
for Juvenile Justice, RFK Community Alliance

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FOREWORD

The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice (RFK National Resource Center) partners with organizations and jurisdictions nationwide to inform youth justice system improvement. Through consultation, technical assistance, and training we seek to improve youth outcomes through integration of key components of best practices. Those include:

1. Commitment to adolescent development science,
2. Best practice methods and approaches that when integrated into daily processes produce a fairer system that supports positive youth outcomes, and
3. Development of evidence-based programs and treatment services that address the underlying risk factors for youth and promote pro-social outcomes.

These components are aligned with the principles of Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management (GFCM). GFCM is built on research that supports human behavior change and is rooted in a developmental approach. There are three key best practice standards that GFCM relies upon for the foundation of the framework:

- 🌱 Improved recognition of the neuroscience of adolescent development,
- 🌱 Adoption of the principles and hallmarks of a developmental approach, and
- 🌱 Enhanced prevention and early intervention and interagency approaches to youth and families with risks and needs in multiple domains.

These pillars directly align with the tenets of the RFK National Resource Center's frameworks whether it be for a Probation and Youth Justice System Review, Dual Status Youth Reform Initiative, Diversion and Alternatives Reform Team Initiative, or training on fundamentals to best practice. We rely on research that tells us youth differ from adults in that they are less able to regulate their own behavior, are more sensitive to external influences, and are less able to think of the long-term effects of their decision-making. GFCM offers a strategic approach to empower youth in setting goals, enabling them to recognize the impact of their decisions. This leads to making prosocial choices and contributes to enhanced community safety by fostering desistance.

The RFK National Resource Center has worked in 38 jurisdictions through the Probation and Youth Justice System Review process to enhance the implementation, timing, and the use of risk-need-responsivity (RNR) screenings and

assessments. Utilizing risk assessments is the best practice for identifying the appropriate level of supervision for youth and for targeting their specific needs and strengths. When implemented with fidelity, RNR instruments divert low-risk youth from the formal system, thus allowing for smaller caseloads in formal probation and increased resources to address the needs of youth with increased risk factors. Probation counselors¹ trained on the framework of GFCM benefit from the time it affords them to develop the type of relationship that enhances a youth's goal setting and overall outcomes.

GFCM integrates the RNR assessment into the case planning process with meaningful youth involvement. The integration of GFCM with RNR balances the identification of risks and strengths to enhance behaviors tied to chosen goals that support their ideal of the future self. Through involvement of system stakeholders, referred providers offering evidence-based treatments and interventions become part of the case-planning team and utilize the youth's goals to motivate them to address their criminogenic needs. This successful approach, coupled with opportunities for youth to identify their interests, is why GFCM incorporates research to help youth not only stop reoffending but also desist from criminal activity.

The RFK National Resource Center is proud to offer the GFCM approach to agencies and localities. We recognize GFCM is an effective and innovative next step toward supporting youth to achieve their fullest potential. For further information and supplemental tools related to GFCM, please refer to the "Appendices & Helpful Resources" section at the end of this guidebook. These resources, including sample materials from jurisdictions that have integrated the GFCM approach, support the implementation of best practices aligned with GFCM principles.

¹ For the purposes of this guidebook, we refer to probation officer as probation counselor in an effort to emphasize the supportive and rehabilitative aspects of probation, highlighting their role in helping young people address underlying issues that may have contributed to their involvement in the youth justice system. GFCM recognizes the potential to integrate the probation counselor as a strength-based asset that youth can rely on to guide and support them in achieving goals that will move them toward their ideal self.

PERSONAL STATEMENT FROM JONATHAN I. CLOUD

Developer of Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management

The aspiration of Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management (GFCM) is to enhance one of the youth justice system's successful initiatives, which is risk-focused practice. I did not develop GFCM to “fix” or “reform” the system. I developed it to seize upon an opportunity that, in my view, is being missed in our work of assessing and managing risk. What is that opportunity? Risk assessment of youth utilizes a process that produces extraordinarily powerful information which can be used to support their growth or maturation. It identifies areas (e.g., risk domains) that must be navigated by youth when undertaking their primary developmental task of forming a positive identity, the doing of which fosters desistance from offending.

After a decade of casework and administrative work in mental health, child protection, foster care, youth justice, and youth development, I engaged in three decades of consultation, training, and technical assistance in youth justice and several other fields. A major part of those three decades was the role I played in several national initiatives sponsored by federal agencies that contributed to moving the youth justice field toward a more structured decision-making approach based on assessing and managing risk to offend. There is now a well-established evidence-based practice based on a risk focus called the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) approach. GFCM is designed to align with this approach, as this Guidebook presents, and thereby enhance it by integrating it with exciting and powerful developmental science. Over the course of providing GFCM training and technical assistance to various jurisdictions around the country since 2020, the phrase that has come to capture this integration of risk science with developmental science is: “Managing risk by facilitating growth.”

Doing this is not easy, but not because it requires “more work.” In fact, GFCM streamlines case planning in a way that naturally involves youth, an aim of many juvenile probation agencies. Managing risk by facilitating growth is not easy because it calls for working in a manner that facilitates who they can become, not merely sanction or stop “delinquent” behavior. This Guidebook attempts to depict this subtlety. Based on experience I fully recognize that it can be a heavy lift for probation counselors to pay attention to what youth are experiencing during formal processing and integrate

*The desired end state is the same
— protecting community safety
by setting youth on a path to
forming positive identities that are
incompatible with offending.*

into their work intentional practices to help youth have specific “growth experiences” that support forming a positive identity during formal processing and community supervision (and beyond, with assistance of community formal and informal supports).

Accordingly, GFCM is not for every jurisdiction. Where it has gained traction thus far is in juvenile probation agencies that were already broadening their focus, so to speak, to link positive youth development with their risk-focused work. *Appendix A* (GFCM Enhancements Underway or Planned in Six Jurisdictions) includes a succinct summary of ways in which some jurisdictions have implemented or plan to implement GFCM enhancements of risk-focused practice after receiving training and technical assistance. What you will notice is that each jurisdiction's implementation work is different. This is as it should be. GFCM is not a one-size-fits-all highly prescriptive “model.” Rather, it is a *framework* which, frankly, is yet another challenge for agencies accustomed to prescriptive, straightforward “checklist” ways of doing work. Each jurisdiction tailors the GFCM framework to enhance its work in ways that it determines works best for them. But in all cases, the desired end state is the same — protecting community safety by setting youth on a path to forming positive identities that are incompatible with offending.

I am honored to partner with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice in offering this Guidebook to the youth justice field. My hope is that it will help improve the important and very difficult work of making our communities safer by helping youth that offend grow out doing so by realizing their potential.

A revised framework that sees effective practice as supporting the youth on a journey of identity shift allows a positive reinterpretation of risk factor research findings that can help explain risk factors, endow them with meaning, identify interactions between them, contextualize them in a way that is meaningful for policy-makers and practitioners, and illuminate what they neglect.¹

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND: WHY UTILIZE A GROWTH-FOCUSED APPROACH TO CASE MANAGEMENT

The longstanding call for a developmental approach to youth justice,ⁱⁱ along with the push for “positive youth justice”ⁱⁱⁱ has begun to influence the core operations of juvenile probation agencies. The Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management Guidebook (herein referred to as the GFCM Guidebook) is intended to assist agencies in continuing their efforts and to do so in a manner that builds on and utilizes the risk paradigm, specifically the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) approach.

A significant aspect of this trend to incorporate developmental principles into probation practice has been the attention given to adolescent brain science. Understanding and accounting for the unique characteristics of the adolescent brain is now widely accepted as appropriate and necessary for being fair and just in how we process youth who have offended. We are on our way to being fully responsive to the developmental factors that play a part in youth offending and, more importantly, to understanding how those factors, when properly construed and addressed, contribute to desisting from offending. However, we are not there yet.

A major challenge in ‘getting there’ will involve a continued effort to understand adolescent brain development and how it is indelibly linked to youths’ innate motivation to grow.^{iv} Unlike some versions of adolescent brain science, an emerging ‘adaptive perspective’^v does not see the adolescent brain as an inferior or immature brain. Rather, it is perfectly designed for the central developmental task of adolescence,^{vi} which is forming a positive identity. We now know that a powerful mental force^{vii} is associated with the enormous cognitive task of identity formation. This task is what enables one to become a responsible adult. Accordingly, frustration for this task and the powerful developmental needs associated with it results in delinquency, among other related difficulties with emotional, cognitive, and psychological well-being.^{viii} Indeed, growth goes off course when the powerful neural capacity of the prefrontal cortex, which emerges in adolescence for identity formation, is prohibited from doing its intended work. But there is more.

Adolescents who do not understand how their behavior is related to attainment of goals are more likely to be delinquent.^{ix}

Key to the background for the development of GFCM is the empirical finding that identity formation plays a central role in the process of desisting from offending.^x This positive outcome stems from supporting the powerful neural capacity of the prefrontal cortex. Yet, supporting positive identity formation is not an intentional aspect of how juvenile probation agencies currently do their work. There are no competencies or practices specifically focused on supporting identity formation. This is why we have begun the process of fully incorporating developmental principles and science into probation practice — with many positive achievements for which we should be proud — but we have not finished this necessary journey.

This GFCM Guidebook aims to support youth justice professionals take on the challenge of intentionally assisting youth with forming positive identities as an integral part of their existing probation work. Our somewhat unrecognized struggle with this challenge manifests itself in juvenile probation agencies finding it difficult to be developmental in their approach. They seek to do so in a manner that does not feel like ‘we’re going soft on offenders’ or ‘judges don’t want to hear about brain development,’ and so on. This tension is part of GFCM’s background. Therefore, GFCM addresses head-on the question: How do we effectively manage risk in a way that is informed by positive youth development research? Let’s delve into what it takes to get there and what went into developing GFCM.

Building on the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) Approach

Our journey to a developmentally informed youth justice system is underway. We don’t need to start over. Utilization of the RNR approach by many juvenile probation agencies has set the stage for effective developmentally informed practices by probation counselors. This is, perhaps, one of the most exciting, yet overlooked successes of our work.

This means risk is not only managed by directly attempting to ameliorate risk factors or criminogenic needs. Indeed, there are strong, well-supported arguments suggesting that only doing this, though logical and efficient (e.g., identify a risk factor then find an intervention that addresses it), is not as robust in its impact as assumed.^{xi} In addition, such an approach rests on a notion of causation that is incomplete, known as the notion of symmetrical (or direct) causation, which we generally embrace when we view risk factors as the only variables that independently “predict” negative behavior and should therefore be the only targets of interventions. We must think and plan more holistically than this.^{xii}

Growth Experiences

The fact is that risk factors interact with a youth's development, or the lack thereof. Above all, a youth's development can overcome risk factors when that development is properly facilitated (primarily facilitating identity formation).^{xiii} In other words, risk factors do harm, but before they can do so one has to be vulnerable to them. Protective factors are a part of reducing vulnerability. But also important are promotive factors^{xiv} that spur growth itself. If we can add this to our work, shouldn't we? GFCM embeds a series of promotive factors or growth experiences. In this enhancement, risk factors constitute barriers to the positive identity youth hope to achieve (e.g., growth), which GFCM calls the youth's "future ideal self."

Young people who cannot vividly envision their future self are more likely to make delinquent choices.^{xv}

GFCM fully embraces the RNR approach and its risk assessment process. As a much-needed supplement to the RNR approach, GFCM pursues managing risk not only by targeting risk factors (which can achieve what's called primary desistance), but also by facilitating growth (which can achieve what's called secondary desistance).

An optimal approach to managing risk would link primary desistance with secondary desistance, behavior change with identity change, and risk management with growth facilitation. We need not choose between 'how developmental we can be' versus 'how tough should we be to protect public safety.' This is a false choice. Growth increases public safety because it involves forming an identity that is incompatible with offending.^{xvi}



GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF GFCM: MANAGING RISK BY FACILITATING GROWTH

The foundational principles that underscore GFCM provide practical strategies to empower probation counselors and youth in navigating uncertainties and achieving sustainable growth. By embracing these principles, we aim to create a balance between risk management and growth facilitation, fostering a resilient and dynamic framework where obstacles become stepping stones and growth becomes the true measure of success. These principles provide the context needed for the GFCM framework.

Principle 1: Early Development Requires Experiences that Support Building Strengths that are Essential for Growing Out of Delinquency

It is well-established that most youth engage in misbehavior and/or delinquency. It is also well-established that most of them naturally grow out of it or desist. Youth who do not grow out of it were not adequately provided with experiences that build the strengths of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. When the need for such growth experiences isn't met, youth are likely to form maladaptive cognitions or ways of thinking about self and others, which, in turn, undermines the adolescent developmental task of forming a positive identity. Forming a positive identity is how youth grow out of delinquency.

Enhancement Needed: Interact with youth in ways that support them in forming trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Competencies and guidelines for interacting with youth in ways that build trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry.

Principle 2: Justice System Formal Processing Can Provide Experiences That Foster Formation of Positive Identities by Which Youth Grow Out of Delinquency

Formal court processing can have unintended negative effects that contribute to the formation of negative identities and subsequent reoffending. This is more likely when the formal processing experience frustrates growth needs and growth motivations, especially the natural motivation to explore and discover what they can do and who they can become. The neural system that comes online during adolescence is designed to support growth motivations. Delinquency is one of the results of experiences that thwart the satisfaction of growth needs and motivations.

Enhancement Needed: Youth experience positive views of self that support the exploring and discovering efforts involved in forming one's identity.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Competencies and guidelines for fostering positive views of self to integrate into routine work that's part of formally processing youth.

Principle 3: The Adolescent Brain Involves an Upgrade Which Makes Possible the Quality of Autonomy Needed to Support Identity Formation

The adolescent brain intensifies previously formed strengths for the task of forming identity, a task that requires taking risks, experimenting, seeking novelty, and doing "big things." Their brains are not immature in the sense of being sub-optimal. They are different from adult brains, but not in an inferior sense. Rather, adolescent brains are perfectly designed for the developmental task of forming a positive identity. The intensified strength essential for this task is autonomy. The youth's prior autonomy undergoes an "upgrade" that manifests itself in the way youth boldly seek to determine who they are and who they can become.

Enhancement Needed: An approach to case planning that uses the youth's desired future ideal self as "the big thing" the plan will help them move toward.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Competencies and guidelines for a) helping youth form and verbalize a desired future ideal self, and b) using it as basis for case plan's long-term goal.

Principle 4: Frustration of Youth's Need for Autonomy in Forming Identity is Associated with Delinquency

Youth need to believe they can cause things to happen for themselves (i.e., self-efficacy). Doing so involves acquiring and processing information about who they are, their hopes, and possibilities. Using this information is an experience of autonomy in figuring out what about themselves needs to change to close the gap between who they are and who they hope to become. They need support, not control, from adults in this undertaking. Their brain upgrade insists that the primary driver of their choices and behaviors be themselves. They are transitioning from dependence on adults to interdependence with adults, a difficult balance in transitioning into adulthood.

Enhancement Needed: Collaboration with youth in the assessment process for them to use its information to participate in determining goals for their change.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Competencies and guidelines for involving youth in seeing who they are currently and participating in setting short-term change goals. Risk factors are seen as barriers to their future ideal self to address with a) their own strengths and, b) interdependence with other formal and informal supports.

Principle 5: Long-Term Behavior Change is More Likely When Planning the Change is Connected to Youth's Desired Future Ideal Self

Supporting youth in forming and working toward their desired future ideal self (i.e., self-realization) is an essential part of forming a positive identity. Positive identity formation correlates with several positive outcomes, including desistance from delinquency. In addition, it naturally involves autonomous internal regulation of behavior. Youth change behavior not only to 'get off probation' or 'stay out of trouble' but to also go after their desired future self.

Enhancement Needed: Case plan action steps for attaining short-term goals that include some actions of interest to the youth and related to their future ideal self, thereby providing intrinsic rewards that bolster internal self-regulation.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Competencies and guidelines for engaging with youth to develop action steps that include court conditions, while also incorporating additional action steps that use strengths in tasks and activities that move them toward their future ideal self.

Principle 6: Focusing on Long-Term Behavior Change Through Identity Formation Entails Tracking Positive Markers of Desistance

Markers of desistance are observable and quantifiable indicators that a youth is reliably engaged in the process of growing or maturing out of offending. It is about more than whether the youth "had another violation" (i.e., recidivism). Markers of desistance are about the positive things that are happening and extent to which subsequent offending, if any, is decreasing in seriousness and frequency. Growth (or desistance) doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

Enhancement Needed: Tracking positive immediate, intermediate, and long-range markers of growing or maturing out of offending.

How GFCM Translates Research into Practice: Resources and guidelines for making the probation period the beginning of the youth's progress toward their future ideal self. Guidelines for selecting positive outcome measures of desistance to confirm that growing out of offending is underway.

See *Appendix B* for a list of Supporting Theories and Research that correspond with each Principle.

GFCM FRAMEWORK

The GFCM framework provides youth with four powerful experiences that support and accelerate identity formation. They are based on neuroscience regarding cognitive processes that: a) translate what happens to and around us into our subjective or inner experiences of our world and, therefore, determine our behavior;^{xvii} and b) uses information relevant to self to form one's identity.^{xviii} Each experience is related to what GFCM refers to as an identity formation task that youth must undertake in order to form a positive identity, which is the primary goal of youth development.^{xix} Identity formation is also directly related to desisting from offending.^{xx,xxi}

- ☐ Exploring who one is and can become in a manner that generates positive perceptions or views of self.
 - Identity Formation Task: Self-exploration to acquire information related to one's interests, capabilities, potentials, or possibilities; a sense of who one hopes to become (i.e., ideal self).
- ☐ Discovering one's strengths, weaknesses, and special qualities in a manner that focuses attention on a positive future for oneself.
 - Identity Formation Task: Self-discovery that reaches some conclusions about aspects of self that moves one toward who one hopes to become and that can block realizing one's ideal self.
- ☐ Believing in one's ability to change to take action and making plans to act.
 - Identity Formation Task: Self-efficacy in using one's strengths to overcome barriers and move toward one's ideal self.
- ☐ Realizing one's potential by taking on positive social roles that allows one to establish a positive identity.
 - Identity Formation Task: Self-realization through engaging in a process of achieving goals and making progress toward one's ideal self (which includes correcting negative behavior and repairing harm done by one's offenses).

The aim of GFCM is for the youth's involvement in the youth justice system to be positive rather than negative. It is incumbent upon the justice system to utilize the principles of adolescent development not only to reduce unintended negative effects of formal processing, but to provide the youth with a series of experiences intended to facilitate positive identity formation. Drawing from the positive youth justice perspective, the ideal is that the youth's experiences in the youth justice system support and advance

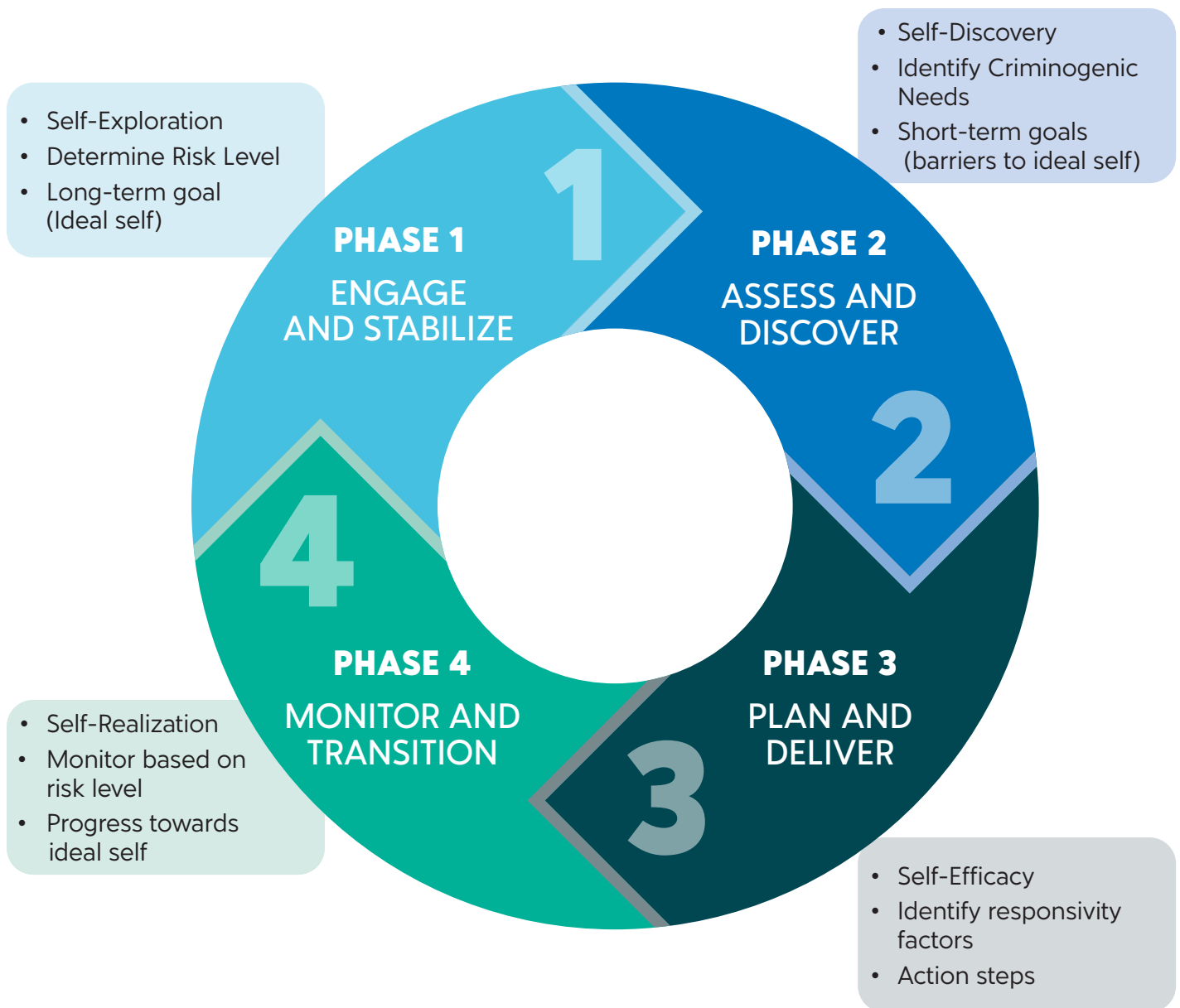
the formation of a positive identity that is incompatible with offending. In order to make this happen, the GFCM framework involves four phases that align with and enhance four RNR practices, as shown on the next page.

The aim of GFCM is for the youth's involvement in the youth justice system to be positive rather than negative.

GFCM Framework Phases	Risk-Needs-Responsivity Practices	How Probation Practice is Enhanced
Phase One: Engage and Stabilize Carry out RNR tasks in a manner that establishes rapport and a sense of safety conducive to helping youth form positive views of self and imagine their future best or ideal self.	Assess Risk to Reoffend (Tasks such as interview youth, investigation, prescreen, report-writing, initial court or detention hearing, diversion)	Lessens likelihood that intake experience causes negative view of self that contribute to offending. Increases youth's future orientation which fosters growth and desistance.
Phase Two: Assess and Discover Carry out RNR tasks in a manner that shares information with youth to help them discover pertinent things about their offense behavior, who they are currently, barriers to future self, and strengths to address barriers.	Identify Criminogenic Needs (Tasks such as assessments, risks and needs, referrals for crisis intervention, report-writing, recommendations for court)	Assessment findings and related recommendations have increased relevance to youth's aspirations; presented to youth in a manner less likely to reinforce negative labels.
Phase Three: Plan and Deliver Carry out RNR tasks in a manner that identifies priorities to address and services to be delivered in order to involve youth in figuring out what they need to do to move toward future self (i.e., includes understanding sanctions and services with which to comply).	Service Matching and Responsivity (Tasks such as dispositional hearing, goals for behavior change, selecting services, developing case plan)	Youth's participation in figuring out what needs to be done increases likelihood of following through by reinforcing a sense of autonomy.
Phase Four: Monitor and Transition Carry out RNR tasks in a manner that supports and tracks delivery of services, youth's well-being, and compliance in order to help youth make progress toward future ideal or best self and, thereby, desist from offending. Link youth with supports beyond probation to maintain progress toward ideal self.	Supervision to Manage Risk to Reoffend (Tasks such as community supervision, working with services and families, responding to probation violations)	Work with youth and family during probation period is effectively about providing an "on-ramp" to youth's journey toward adulthood, not just consequences for offending.

Each phase involves an overarching practice that has a direct impact on supporting identity formation tasks. As highlighted above, these tasks are: 1) exploring oneself and who one can become; 2) discovering strengths and weaknesses (things that move one toward or away from one's ideal self); 3) figuring out what one needs to do and effectively taking responsible action; and 4) realizing what one has to offer, making progress, and doing so in order to reach one's ideal self. So, the four overarching practices (also referred to as competencies) entail facilitating self-exploration, self-discovery, self-efficacy, and self-realization (*see graphic on next page*).

As probation counselors work with youth in each of the GFCM phases, youth are more likely to have growth experiences. Probation counselors become empowered and skilled at utilizing the growth experiences as powerful ways to involve youth in case planning, which serves as the initial step in helping the youth form a positive identity. The case plan is much more than a document about compliance; rather, it is the youth's path to a positive identity and, eventually, transition into adulthood.



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FOUR PHASES OF GFCM

PHASE ONE: ENGAGE AND STABILIZE

In Phase One, the RNR task of initial risk assessment is completed and the youth's risk level for reoffending is determined. During the assessment as well as subsequent conversations, the probation counselor gains a general sense of the youth's development story. This includes the offense but is not limited to it. Through guided facilitation by the probation counselor (possibly using Motivational Interviewing skills and techniques already in practice in some probation agencies), the youth begins a process of self-exploration. Relevant aspects of the youth's past and present, as well as the youth's possibilities or hopes, are discussed. This overarching practice is essentially about working with the youth to redirect their story, or to help them become better 'authors' of their stories and take responsibility for it (i.e., accountability). By "facilitating self-exploration," the youth is able to explore who they can become and share their interests, passions, and aspirations. When the youth verbally expresses who they want to be or what they want to do in the future (which may take a considerable amount of time for some youth), or when the probation counselor suggests some possibilities for youth unable to do so on their own, it becomes the basis for the case plan's long-term goal related to the youth's ideal self. (This ideal self can and often does change, which is a part of ongoing self-exploration. Such changes do not negatively affect the case plan's short-term goals, which are developed during Phases Two.)

Key Actions for Phase One: Engage and Stabilize

- **Overarching Practice: Facilitate self-exploration** – Assist the youth to imagine and verbalize their future ideal self as alternative to offending (informs long-term goal).
 - ✓ Build the youth's trust.
 - ✓ Consider the youth's supports, functioning, and need for immediate intervention (i.e., crisis).
 - ✓ Get to know youth's "development story" and identity (i.e., commitments, goals, roles).
 - ✓ Elicit youth's "hope story" by exploring possibilities about who they can become; ideal future self. Offer suggestions based on what has been learned about youth's interests.
 - ✓ Get youth's 'offense story' (i.e., current self). (This is typically part of the investigation.)
 - ✓ Conduct an initial risk assessment; youth's risk to reoffend (i.e., prescreen or "initial assessment").

- ✓ Make recommendation decision regarding nature of response (e.g., no action, informal action, diversion, formal action) as set forth by agency policy and procedure.

PHASE TWO: ASSESS AND DISCOVER

In Phase Two, the RNR task of identifying protective factors and dynamic risk factors are identified by using the risk assessment instrument. These factors are prioritized to address the youth's barriers to making progress toward their ideal self (i.e., becoming an airline pilot). These priorities simultaneously address issues associated with the youth's offense which, with GFCM, is reframed by youth as obstacles to what they want for their future (i.e., becoming an airline pilot). So, when talking with youth, the 'criminogenic needs' identified by the assessment are referred to as 'barriers to who you want to become.' The probation counselor will help the youth discover strengths to counter their barriers or weaknesses. Parents and/or caretakers are encouraged to be involved in this discussion, especially as it relates to strengths and how they can be used to address criminogenic needs. Together, the youth and probation counselor develop short-term goals to address priority risk factors. These short-term goals become part of the case plan. Youth involvement in case planning is a natural part of the process of "starting your journey to becoming an airline pilot."

Key Actions for Phase Two: Assess and Discover

- **Overarching Practice: Facilitate self-discovery** – Frame ideal self in an achievable way; help youth discover strengths and weaknesses or barriers in relation to it.
 - ✓ Build youth's autonomy (i.e., managing and directing self; having some control over choice of actions; appropriate independence).
 - ✓ Elicit youth's thoughts about attaining their future ideal self.
 - ✓ Use comprehensive assessment to help identify strengths and weaknesses or barriers in relation to their ideal self.
 - ✓ Identify criminogenic needs that are barriers to their ideal self (informs short-term goals)
 - ✓ Consider youth's needs regarding physical, emotional, and psychological well-being that may be or become challenges to making progress (e.g., lasting effects of prior trauma).

- ✓ Help youth verbalize strengths and ideas about short-term goals to address criminogenic needs or barriers to their ideal self; develop short-term behavior change goals with youth.
- ✓ Consider protective factors to buffer or weaken the effects of criminogenic needs.

- ✓ Enlist needed services in collaboration with the youth and family (i.e., referrals, agreements).

A more distinct and detailed discussion of the case planning process is provided in the next section, *Incorporating a Growth Focused Approach into the Case Planning Process*.

PHASE THREE: PLAN AND DELIVER

In Phase Three, the probation counselor supports and encourages the youth's self-efficacy by involving them in developing action steps, including those of interest to the youth, to help achieve the short-term goals. Using the RNR responsivity principle, the probation counselor tailors interventions to the youth's learning style, needs, motivations, and strengths. Initial action steps are intentionally crafted to be easy for the youth to achieve, ideally in one to two days each, so that early success is achieved. By assisting youth with seeing and believing that they can do better; they are beginning to see a path to their future self as a result of interactions with the probation counselor, and, more importantly, they are starting to believe 'this can really happen,' which is what 'facilitating self-efficacy' is all about.

Key Actions for Phase Three: Plan and Deliver

- **Overarching Practice: Facilitate self-efficacy** – Involve youth in planning action steps that they believe they can achieve (i.e., self-efficacy).
 - ✓ Build youth's initiative by involving them in discussing how their action steps help them achieve their short-term behavior change goals.
 - ✓ Enlist appropriate services that can be responsive to youth's characteristics and increase specific protective factors previously considered in Phase Two.
 - ✓ Connect youth to appropriate services that can be responsive to their aspirations (i.e., hopes, interests). (This is called "specific responsivity" while the above is called "general responsivity.")
 - ✓ Connect youth to appropriate services that can address their vulnerabilities (i.e., trauma, etc.).
 - ✓ Help youth verbally articulate action steps.
 - ✓ Reinforce or facilitate youth's intention to follow the action steps.

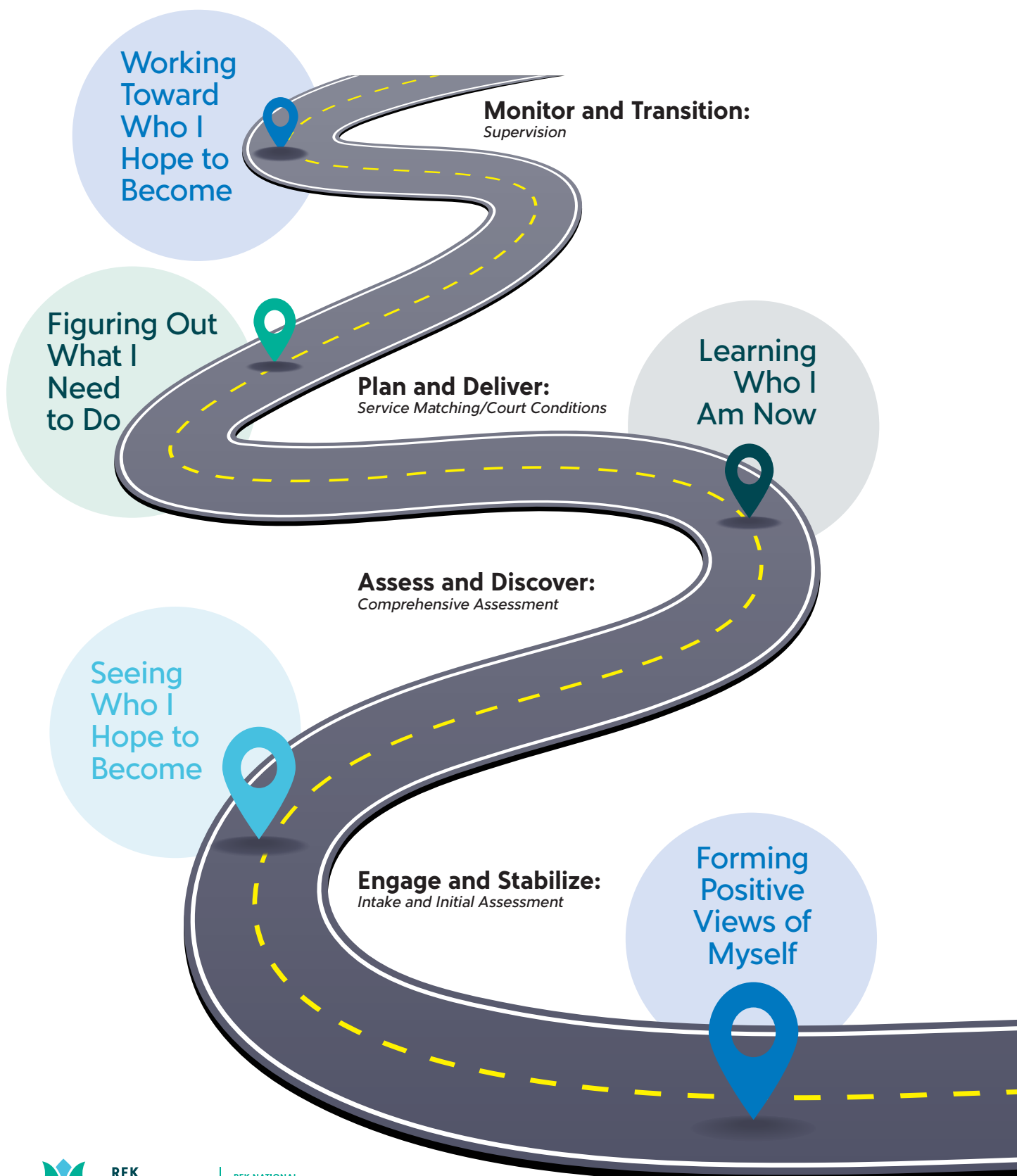
PHASE FOUR: MONITOR AND TRANSITION

In Phase Four, the probation counselor assists the youth with following through on action steps as laid out in the case plan, overcoming barriers in doing so, solving problems, and getting back on track after setbacks so progress is steadily made toward who the youth hopes to become. On this journey, youth are complying with court conditions and cooperating with services as both are necessary to overcome barriers. This is called 'facilitating self-realization.' The probation counselor brings together key players involved in providing services and support to the youth, including the youth's parents/caretakers. This ensures coordination of services, efficient problem-solving when the need arises, and intentional recognition of the youth's progress.

Key Actions for Phase Four: Monitor and Transition

- **Overarching Practice: Facilitate self-realization** – Support youth's growth toward ideal self; taking small action steps to move toward their future self/identity.
 - ✓ Build youth's industry (i.e., doing and succeeding with tasks) by rehearsing case plan action steps.
 - ✓ Build a team of support for youth and family.
 - ✓ Recognize progress with action steps, achievement of goals, accountability, compliance; make adjustments as needed.
 - ✓ Monitor outcome measures – Markers of Desistance (i.e., signs of growing out of offending; positive identity change).
 - ✓ Reinforce interaction between youth and services.
 - ✓ Reward youth's efforts and cooperative work with services.
 - ✓ Transition youth and family to long-term supports to continue progress toward ideal self after probation.

Making Justice System Formal Processing a Growth Experience



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INCORPORATING A GROWTH-FOCUSED APPROACH INTO THE CASE PLANNING PROCESS

MOVING BEYOND A DEFICIT-BASED APPROACH

Traditionally, case planning in the youth justice system has relied on a deficit-based approach, which emphasizes identifying what is perceived to be wrong or lacking in the youth's life, such as behavioral issues, deficiencies in skills or resources, or negative influences. These case plans have primarily revolved around court ordered obligations that must be substantially completed for a youth to be successfully released from their supervision period.

In recent years, there has been a shift with the integration of robust risk assessments identifying criminogenic risks contributing to delinquency. This shift has expanded case plans to include services and interventions addressing needs beyond court ordered conditions. This type of case planning is now common practice across most jurisdictions nationwide. However, it's worth noting that these documents are often prepared without input from the youth or family,^{xxii} being presented to the youth early in their supervision period and referenced during supervised probation.

While a deficit-based approach may be useful in addressing immediate challenges or risks, it represents a missed opportunity for motivating youth to change in order to realize their ideal self, which is called identity-based motivation.^{xxiii} Additionally, it overlooks the potential to integrate the probation counselor as a strength-based asset that youth can rely on to guide and support them in achieving goals that will move them toward their ideal self. This deficit-based planning primarily focuses on what is going wrong in a youth's life.

Ideally, case plans should include protective factors or strengths that can help reduce risks in the identified areas of need. While this marks an improvement over historical case planning, which solely focused on compliance-based conditions, it still retains a deficit-based approach, as it uses strengths solely to accomplish the compliance measures.

With the implementation of GFCM, there is an imperative to include the youth in building their plan to incorporate elements that will contribute to the youth's future self. This approach not only to reduce recidivism (i.e., primary desistance) but also to contribute to secondary desistance rooted in identity change.

In GFCM, the probation counselor facilitates four identity formation tasks (self-exploration, self-discovery, self-efficacy, and self-realization) in a manner that involves youth in building their case plans. To facilitate these tasks while building a growth-focused case plan, the probation counselor's work needs to be structured and *effective*. GFCM provides both.

Structure: Four broad and flexible phases, each of which has one overarching practice or way of interacting with youth to facilitate positive identity formation.

Effectiveness: Given that identity formation is a cognitive undertaking, the identity formation tasks naturally involve the youth in using and developing four social-cognitive skills.^{xxiv} These skills support growth and, thereby, positive behavior and are demonstrated by what GFCM calls "Youth Wins." Each Youth Win is about the youth's involvement in the case planning process. Again, case plan development is a growth opportunity for the youth, not just a task for the probation counselor. The Youth Wins and social-cognitive skills facilitated by the probation counselor are as follows:

- 🌱 *Youth verbally expresses an ideal self.*
Social-cognitive skill → awareness of self.
- 🌱 *Youth verbally expresses strengths and goals.*
Social-cognitive skill → stable positive concept of self.
- 🌱 *Youth identifies action steps to reach short-term goals.*
Social-cognitive skill → having realistic beliefs about one's capabilities.
- 🌱 *Youth works with services on action steps.*
Social-cognitive skill → committing to positive goals.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF GROWTH-FOCUSED CASE PLANNING

In the section on Phase One, three key tasks were presented in relation to case management, capturing the distinctive characteristic of growth-focused case planning, as follows:

- 🌱 Get to know the youth's "development story" and identity (i.e., commitments, goals, roles).
- 🌱 Elicit the youth's "hope story" by exploring possibilities about who they can become; ideal future self.
- 🌱 Get the youth's "offense story" (i.e., current self).

McAdams' (1994) third level of personality is the internalized and evolving narrative individuals construct to integrate their pasts, presents, and perceived futures into a personal identity that sustains and guides behavior.^{xxxv}

The term 'story' is used in these key actions, and it is an easy term to grasp. It is based, however, on a powerful research-based perspective that uses the term 'narrative,' as opposed to 'story.' The case plan goes beyond mere compliance, as mentioned above; it is structured to alter or change the youth's narrative, thus having a strong future orientation.^{xxxvi} This is why the long-term goal, which is based on the youth's future ideal self, extends well beyond the probation period (e.g., 'I want to have my own business and have jobs for people.')xxxvii The probation period marks the beginning of pursuing the future ideal self, which involves the critical work of changing aspects of one's current narrative or current self that act as barriers to one's future self. This focus on altering or changing the youth's narrative is of major importance because a youth's self-narrative shapes and guides future behavior, and GFCM places a strong emphasis on the future part of the youth's narrative, or their desired ideal self (see text box). This distinction of a growth-focused approach to case planning contributes to secondary desistance, moving beyond recidivism as the only outcome measure of importance. The youth's self-narrative is depicted in the graphic below.

PAST SELF (Who youth has been)
Past experiences, roles, behaviors (includes static risk factors)
PRESENT SELF (Who youth is)
Current experiences, roles, behaviors (includes dynamic risk factors)
FUTURE SELF (Who youth hopes to become)
Hopes, aspirations projections (i.e., ideal self).

These three areas aid in organizing the information and provide a sense of 'narrative coherence,' by connecting scattered pieces of information. Understanding the

significance of the future perspective allows us to prioritize the youth's interests, recognizing them as a key element in fostering desistance.

SUPERVISING YOUTH TO CHANGE THEIR NARRATIVE

Since the case plan is about altering or changing the youth's narrative, it is imperative that they participate in its development. To build a co-created individualized plan endorsed by the youth, they must believe in their autonomy. This belief is crucial for a youth to develop trust in their probation counselor and, most importantly, in themselves as they strive to achieve their ideal self.

Autonomy, in this context, refers to one's ability to act in accordance with values that support their ideal self rather than personal desires. All too often, we witness youth enter the youth justice system because they were influenced by peers in ways that was contradicted their values but fulfilled their need to belong to a group. While this is a normal part of adolescent development, for youth with significant risk factors, it can create conditions that jeopardize public safety and subject the youth to the harmful consequences, deepening their involvement in the youth justice system.

The process of a youth developing autonomy is part of their adolescent development. When a youth is comfortable in asserting their autonomy, they will demonstrate confidence in their actions, manifested through a willingness to try new things (i.e., initiative), a sense of persistence (i.e., industry), and a demonstration of self-control.

Conversely, when a youth lacks confidence, they may be more inclined to quit after making a mistake and may fear trying new things due to the possibility of failure. Probation counselors should be mindful of this important point with the youth to foster their autonomy and confidence.

Given the nature of supervision and the complexity of accomplishing the goals of a case plan, which includes individualized interventions and court-ordered conditions, it is likely that a youth will not demonstrate perfection, and there will be periods where they make mistakes. Depending on how these mistakes are handled and addressed by the probation counselor, they can either reinforce the youth's autonomy, thereby supporting growth, or contribute to fear, limiting the youth's confidence in achieving their ideal self. In this context, confidence has been shown to be an indicator of growth or thriving, which is one of GFCM's markers of desistance, discussed in the next section on *Supporting Sustainable Behavior Change*.

Autonomy is also closely linked to motivation and intent. Motivation which encompasses commitment, intent, and the purpose behind one's actions, is one of three aspects of identity, along with goals and roles. In this regard, it deals with a major desistance factor known as agency. Understanding the motivation behind a youth's behavior offers insight into their current identity or identity formation efforts. The youth's offending behavior had a goal, possibly demonstrating 'negative autonomy,' which is part of a 'negative or anti-social identity.' The role a youth played in that offense episode likely involved violation of norms, rules, or laws. A compelling and positive ideal self helps to elevate the youth's motivation and autonomy. Higher positive motivation and autonomy are correlated with higher levels of growth.

Probation counselors can support autonomy and facilitate case planning by implementing the following strategies:

- ✿ Recognizing the youth's courage and strength in being able to talk about making a change.
- ✿ Reinforcing youth's unique or special qualities to lessen feelings of guilt, shame, or self-criticism.
- ✿ Countering ambivalence by providing clear, doable short-term goals by which the change can be made.
- ✿ Noting previous successes and accomplishments, no matter how small.^{xxviii}

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Adopting a growth-focused approach to case management necessitates applying the same growth-focused approach to monitoring and evaluating youth outcomes. To achieve this, we must deepen the manner in which we measure the effects of our work. Traditionally, the youth justice system has heavily relied on recidivism rates as the primary measure of effectiveness. However, recidivism is not a robust measure of effectiveness,^{xxix} especially with regard to Growth-Focused Youth Justice Case Management. Relying solely on recidivism as an effectiveness metric can mislead policy and practice and lead to inappropriate comparisons between dissimilar populations. In essence, it shifts the focus of practice towards negative outcomes rather than positive outcomes.^{xxx}

Secondary desistance represents a deeper process compared to simply controlling one's behavior to avoid repeating an offense, known as primary desistance. Secondary desistance involves gradually moving toward a life or identity with which offending is not compatible. The youth's growth or maturation increases until their personality^{xxxi} leaves little or

no room for offending or trying not to reoffend.* Fortunately, we now possess scientific insights that enable us to identify and monitor indicators of this growth process, which are incorporated in GFCM's monitoring and evaluation system.

The GFCM monitoring and evaluation system shifts our focus from the negative (whether youth reoffended) to the positive (extent of youth's growth or progress toward ideal self). This takes us from "primary desistance" to "secondary desistance" and "tertiary desistance," as shown in the table on the following page (*The Desistance Science Supporting GFCM*).

1. Primary Desistance:

- ✿ **Behavior:** Changing or stopping an offending act.
- ✿ **Formal Compliance:** Do what is required to get out of trouble or off probation.
- ✿ **Short-Term:** Typically, not reoffending during probation period.

2. Secondary Desistance:

- ✿ **Identity:** Forming positive commitments, goals, and roles that are incompatible with offending.
- ✿ **Substantive Compliance:** Taking actions to become the person one aspires to be.
- ✿ **Long-Term:** Becoming a person for whom non-offending is a permanent aspect of who they are.

3. Tertiary Desistance:

- ✿ **Belonging:** Engaging in social networks that recognize and support the youth's positive identity.
- ✿ **Substantive Compliance:** Taking actions to become the person one aspires to be.
- ✿ **Long-Term:** The person has permanent prosocial roles in family, school, community, etc.

In other words, the focus shifts from behavioral compliance to a changed identity. The process of forming a positive identity is facilitated throughout all four case management phases


* While many would consider controlling one's urges or impulses to offend to be a success, it is actually only a partial success. The desistance research calls this "primary desistance" that is typically short-term in duration and based primarily on formal compliance in response to external behavior controls. See supporting research:


* Graham, H., & McNeill, F. (2017). "Desistance: Envisioning Futures." In P. Carlen & L. Ayres Frances (Eds.), *Alternative Criminologies* (pp. 433-451). London: Routledge.


* Nugent, B., & Schinkel, M. (2016). "The Pains of Desistance." *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 16(5), 568-584.

* King, S. (2013). "Early Desistance Narratives: A Qualitative Analysis of Probationers' Transitions Towards Desistance." *Punishment & Society*, 15(2), 147-165.

and especially so during community supervision in *Phase Four* (Monitoring and Transitioning). Now, attention turns to the short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes that indicate the extent to which desistance is underway and a positive identity is being formed. GFCM offers four markers as follows:

- 
Short-Term Outcome:

 - Positive bonds or connections**
- 
Intermediate Outcomes:

 - Psychosocial maturity**
 - Moral agency or thriving**
- 
Long-Term Outcome:

 - Achieving a positive identity**

Positive Bonds: To move toward or realize their ideal self, youth need positive bonds that are relationships of deep trust, beginning with the probation counselor and family members (when possible), and later including professionals in other agencies as set forth by the case plan's action steps. Through the action steps, these bonds are deepened and, ideally, new bonds are formed (e.g., at school, treatment groups, residential placements, civic organizations, mentors, etc.). Among other things, these bonds affirm the youth's ideal self and help make progress toward it possible.

Psychosocial Maturity: In the context of powerful bonds and the support they provide for carrying out case plan action steps, psychosocial maturity increases. This outcome cuts across all interventions by agencies in that, whatever their specific program results may be regarding case plan targeted

items, maturity increases as indicated by improving self-control, future orientation (i.e., consequential thinking), and taking responsibility.

Moral Agency (Thriving): With increasing psychosocial maturity, progress toward optimal self-realization now can involve distinctive, sometimes bold, acts of moral agency. The youth not only knows the right things to do, but they also exercise agency in that they effectively do them (e.g., making amends for past wrong doing, helping others, working harder in school, getting along with parents/caretakers, etc.). In various ways, the youth increases in competence, confidence, caring, character, and contributing.^{xxxii}

Positive Identity: It is the capacity for moral agency or thriving (i.e., competence, confidence, caring, character, contributing) that moves the youth into the final dimension of self-realization, which is establishing a new positive identity. Again, a positive identity entails devotion to a positive purpose or core motivation for one's life, goals to act on this purpose, and meaningful roles for pursuing and attaining one's life goals. This marker will, in most instances, go beyond the typical probation period, which is why the transitioning part of phase four of case management is so important. It involves setting in place ongoing supports and services to help youth continue their journey toward their future identity. Identity is the component of adolescent psychological functioning and social life that allows the individual to select the path that they will pursue in life, to find the means to attain the goals they have chosen, and to cope with failures or losses in the means to reach goals.^{xxxiii}

The Desistance Science Support GFCM		
Primary Desistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Change Formal compliance Short term 	<p>The intended combined effect on youth of the growth facilitation practices is to create for them an experience that is more likely to support forming or maintaining a positive identity. This relies on a case plan that includes opportunities for using strengths to contribute in positive ways.</p>
Secondary Desistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity Change Substantive compliance Long-term 	
Tertiary Desistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belonging Change Substantive compliance Long-term 	

CONCLUSION

To deepen their understanding of the GFCM approach, readers are encouraged to explore the “Appendices & Helpful Resources” section at the end of this guidebook. These materials, featuring examples from jurisdictions that are effectively integrating GFCM, provide valuable support for implementing best practices in line with GFCM principles. For ongoing updates and additional resources, please also visit the RFK National Resource Center's website at: www.rfknrcjj.org.

THE BENEFITS OF GFCM

1. Enhance Probation Interactions with Youth:

Probation counselor's core practices or primary ways of interacting with youth support four critical adolescent developmental tasks associated with forming a positive identity.

Why It Matters: By supporting developmental tasks, the probation counselor's interaction accelerates the youth's growth.

2. Actively Involve Youth in Case Planning:

Youth's participation in building the case plan is a natural and integral part of how the probation counselor interacts with youth.

Why It Matters: The case planning process itself becomes a growth experience for the youth, consistent with the evidence-based principle of making every contact or interaction an opportunity for change.

3. Shifts Focus from Past to Future:

Focus shifts from only dealing with what youth have done to also moving them toward who they can become; from only managing risk to also realizing possibilities.

Why It Matters: The overall experience of justice involvement in general and of the case plan in particular is what the youth can move toward (i.e., approach motivation and approach goals) as opposed to what they must move away from (i.e., avoidance motivation and avoidance goals). Behavior rooted in approach motivation increases psychological well-being, whereas avoidance motivation is linked to lower well-being and higher levels of anxiety, anger, and frustration.^{xxxiv}

Altogether, the above benefits provide youth with a justice experience driven by internal regulation of behavior, which is more likely to produce long-term change or secondary desistance. In this regard, probation practice is enhanced by approaching internal regulation in a manner that is as organized as the current approach to external regulation. In this way, GFCM does not replace or disregard the importance of immediate external regulation measures, especially with youth that engage in chronic, serious offending. Community safety demands it. At some point, however, youth need to regulate themselves more effectively, and with identity formation being a primary source of internal regulation, GFCM enhances the work of externally regulating or controlling youth and, thereby, supports community safety.

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APPENDIX A

Growth-Focused Case Management (GFCM)

Juvenile Probation Enhancements Underway or Planned in Six Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions	Enhancements Underway or Planned by Jurisdictions as of May 2023 Based on Training and Technical Assistance Received			
	Case Planning and Management	Supervision and Staff Development	Legal and Community Partners	Evaluation and Outcomes
Hennepin County, Minnesota (<i>National Demonstration Site</i>)	GFCM Implementation Team meets regularly to plan and monitor progress. Revising case planning policy based on GFCM framework. Requirement in place that case plan long-term goals focus on youth's ideal self. Working to modify case planning software to align with GFCM. Training and coaching on case noting to capture growth experiences. Revising interview questions and report-writing format for front-end investigation POs.	GFCM integrated into supervision and coaching approach. Established a "GFCM Practice Group" for intensive work and serve later as supports to other POs. Special training for front end POs to support agency's new emphasis on building trust with youth. Established "vision board" to post youth ideal selves being supported. GFCM Newsletter to inform ongoing growth-facilitation practices. "GFCM practice labs" to increase proficiency of POs.	Orientation of legal and community partners on principles of GFCM. Bench Card developed for Judges Exploring funding dedicated to services that support youth exploration for identity formation. Modified provider RFPs and contract language to align service delivery with GFCM. Ideal selves posted on "vision board" and efforts made to identify services to support them.	Established performance measures for POs to ensure fidelity to GFCM. Established outcome measures based on GFCM markers of desistance. Developed implementation logic model and theory of change. Experimenting with revised case noting format to better capture growth facilitation activities and outputs. System to track markers of desistance and youth outcomes.
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin	Officially adopted GFCM as case management approach per agency website. Added to case plans a long-term goal based on youth's future ideal self. Revised agenda for staffing out-of-home placement cases; emphasis on youth's strengths and future, and participation in the staffing process.	Established GFCM training team within Quality Assurance Unit; uses a curriculum developed by consultant. Redesigned initial training for newly onboarded POs to support utilization of a growth facilitation approach.	Oriented legal and community partners on principles of GFCM. Intensive training of contracted community partners on GFCM and markers of desistance. Used GFCM framework to enhance Credible Messenger program. Provider network implementing agency-specific growth-focused quality improvement action plans.	Training to contracted community partners to enhance their program evaluation to include GFCM's markers of desistance (i.e., markers of growth). Incorporated GFCM markers of desistance into accountability program performance measures.
Hancock County, Ohio	Modified pre-dispositional process and timeline to increase time for PO growth facilitation work.	Supervisor tracking PO case notes for documentation of growth facilitation competencies and effects on youth's formal processing experience.	Judge enhanced interim orders to include working with POs in accordance with five benchmarks indicative of a growth experience. Judge includes discussion of youth's future ideal self and case plan as part of dispositional hearings.	Evaluating effects pre-dispositional enhancement on reduction in youth ordered to probation.

Continued on following page

APPENDIX A - Continued

Jurisdictions	Enhancements Underway or Planned by Jurisdictions as of May 2023 Based on Training and Technical Assistance Received			
	Case Planning and Management	Supervision and Staff Development	Legal and Community Partners	Evaluation and Outcomes
Washoe County, Nevada	Revised case plan policy to include long-term goal based on youth's future ideal self and related short-term goals and action steps. Utilizing GFCM framework to comply with individualized case planning state statute.	Involved POs in process of formally adopting GFCM framework and tailoring it to link with current work. Established "vision board" to post youth ideal selves being supported. TA to be utilized to develop growth-focused approach to conversations with and supervision of youth. TA to be utilized to enhance supervision of growth-focused practices.	Working to engage programs to support with youth ideal selves.	Case plan audits to assess PO utilization of GFCM's principles. Enhancing case review process to better support growth facilitation practices.
Clark County, Nevada	Involving POs in a gradual process of utilizing the GFCM case planning approach.	Quality Assurance Team taking on task of continued GFCM training and coaching.	Oriented legal partners on principles of GFCM.	
Fargo and Jamestown Regions, North Dakota	Case planning driven by focus on youth's future ideal self. Developed process of engaging youth by posting description of ideal self on agency "wall of change." Youth's ideal self utilized to guide transitioning youth off probation.	2024 training to focus on applying growth perspective to: 1) trauma screening and assessing risks and needs; 2) reports, court processes, and family engagement; and 3) referrals for service, the Dual Status Initiative, and North Dakota's Restorative Justice approach.		

APPENDIX B

Guiding Principles of GFCM – Supporting Theories and Research

Principle 1: Early Development Requires Experiences that Support Building Strengths that Later are Essential for Growing Out of Delinquency

- ✿ Erik Erikson's Model of Psychosocial Development
- ✿ "Adolescence as Identity Synthesis: Erikson's Psychosocial Approach," in Identity in Adolescence: The Balance Between Self and Other, Jane Kroger, (includes ego development research which defines levels of growth)
- ✿ Psychosocial Development and the Development of Problem Behavior During Adolescence, Menno Arnold Jan Ezinga (links lower ego development or growth with delinquency)
- ✿ Maturation Theory (aligns with Erikson's model; see "Extending the Integrated Maturation Theory of Desistance from Crime to Childhood and Adolescence," Michael Rocque)
- ✿ Maladaptive Schemas (cognitive consequences of unmet needs; see Schema Therapy: The CBT Distinctive Features Series, 2011)

Principle 2: Justice System Formal Processing Can Provide Experiences That Foster Formation of Positive Identities by Which Youth Grow Out of Delinquency

- ✿ Iatrogenic Effects on Youth of Justice System Involvement (numerous studies)
- ✿ Procedural Justice and Labelling Theory
- ✿ Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model (later version presents lower deficiency needs and higher growth needs)
- ✿ James Marcia's and Koen Luyckx's Models of the Identity Formation Process
- ✿ Identity Capital
- ✿ Growth Motivation, Maslow's Meta-Motivations and Meta-Needs
- ✿ Need Satisfaction and Need Frustration
- ✿ Strain Theory and Status Frustration Theory

Principle 3: Adolescent Brain Development Involves an Upgrade Which Makes Possible the Quality of Autonomy Needed to Support Identity Formation

- ✿ Adolescent Brain Development (see The Adolescent Brain: Reaching for Autonomy, Robert Sylwester); especially brain science that contrasts an adaptive model of risky behavior with the prevailing psychopathology model (see Ellis et. al., in Developmental Psychology, 2012)
- ✿ Promotive Factors (influences growth and are different than protective factors)
- ✿ Cognitive Processes in Social Cognition
- ✿ Development of Executive Function
- ✿ Self Determination Theory
- ✿ Autonomy Disturbances and Identity Formation (See Ryan and Deci, 2015)
- ✿ Developmental Potential and Theory of Positive Disintegration (see Living with Intensity, Daniels and Piechowski)

Principle 4: Frustration of Youth's Need for Autonomy in Forming Identity is Associated with Delinquency

- 🌱 Positive Youth Development
- 🌱 Intentional Self-Regulation
- 🌱 Association Between Unmet Needs and Delinquency (see “Desire for Autonomy and Adolescent Delinquency: A Latent Growth Curve Analysis,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 2010)
- 🌱 Self-Determination Theory and Juvenile Delinquency (Hawkins and Novy, 2011)
- 🌱 Capacity to Aspire

Principle 5: Long-Term Behavior Change is More Likely When Planning the Change is Connected to Youth's Desired Future Ideal Self

- 🌱 Identity-Based Motivation (Daphna Oyserman)
- 🌱 Possible Selves (see “Positive Expected Selves and Desistance Among Serious Adolescent Offenders,” Na and Jang, 2019)
- 🌱 Identity Theory of Criminal Desistance (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009)
- 🌱 Future Orientation (see “Maturing Out of Delinquency: Unpacking the Effects of Identity Achievement and Future Orientation on Crime Desistance,” *Self and Identity*, G. Walters, 2019)

Principle 6: Focusing on Long-Term Behavior Change Through Identity Formation Entails Tracking Positive Markers of Desistance

- 🌱 Desistance From Crime
- 🌱 Measuring Desistance
- 🌱 Bonding and Attachment Theory
- 🌱 Psychosocial Maturity and Desistance from Crime (see OJJDP Bulletin, March 2015)
- 🌱 Positive Youth Development: The 5 C's of Thriving
- 🌱 Identity and Cognitive Transformation Maturation

GFCM National Demonstration Site

Hennepin County (MN) Juvenile Probation Growth-Focused Case Management Initial 2023 Logic Model

THEORY OF CHANGE:

By making formation of positive identity based on a future ideal self our developmentally informed way to hold youth accountable and motivate behavior change, youth will pursue positive self-defining roles and eventually grow or mature out of offending.

Inputs (Resources to Support the Work)	Activities (Growth Facilitation Performance)	Outputs (Direct Results of Performance)	Outcomes (Changes Produced by Direct Results)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency vision, purpose, and values Administrative support and guidance Consulting, technical assistance, training Research on growth and desistance GFCM tools and materials Agency policies, procedures Supervision and coaching Probation officer knowledge, skills, and abilities Support staff knowledge, skills, and abilities Implementation team Implementation team sub-groups Practice group Collaboration with agency partners Agency technology State technology, policies, and funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building youths' trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry so they experience positive views of self Facilitating youths' self-exploration so they experience imagining their future ideal selves Facilitating youths' self-discovery so they experience learning about who they are now (i.e., strengths to move toward ideal self and barriers to overcome) Facilitating youths' self-efficacy so they experience figuring out what they need to do to move toward ideal self Facilitating youths' self-realization so they experience making progress toward their ideal selves Utilizing youths' ideal selves as basis for case plan long-term goal Utilizing youths' risks and needs as barriers to ideal self and basis for short-term goals (i.e., barriers to overcome) Utilizing youths' strengths, interests, EBPs, and appropriate services for action steps to attain short-term goals Involving youth in the case planning process Linking youth with supports that extend beyond probation period <p><i>(Above are integrated with routine probation work; shapes "how" the work is done.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth relying on POs and prosocial others Youth directing and managing selves in small yet significant ways Youth starting to take actions to get things done regarding their situation and case plan Youth engaging in persistent effort to accomplish things regarding their situation and case plan Youth verbalizing future ideal selves Youth verbalizing strengths and barriers and ideas for goals Youth showing that they believe they change or improve Youth working cooperatively with services and supports to attain case plan goals Case plans with a long-term goal and related short-term goals and action steps Completion of case plan goals and action steps Involvement of community partners in supporting role or identity exploration by youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth engage in positive bonds with others (indicated by connections with prosocial others) Youth exhibit psychosocial maturity (indicated by control of impulses and taking long-term consequences into account or future orientation). Youth exhibit moral agency (indicated by demonstrating ability to perform adequately in the world; accomplishes what is needed to have effective interactions with people and organizations or social competence). Youth begin forming positive identities (indicated by: 1) committing to their long-term ideal self goals (i.e., purpose); and 2) trying out activities or roles related to their ideal selves (i.e., role exploration).

APPENDIX D

Bench Card for Growth-Focused Juvenile Court Hearings

Hennepin County Hennepin County MN Juvenile Court

The aim of this bench card is to enhance, not replace, what you already do to hold youth accountable and protect community safety. It offers sample questions and considerations that support the process of growing out of or desisting from offending.

Court Hearings	Experiences During Hearings for Growth-Focused Approach to Accountability, Compliance, Behavior Change, and Community Safety			
	Gaining Positive Views of Self	Forming Their Future Ideal Self	Understanding Who They Currently Are	Knowing What They Need to Do
Detention	What is one good thing about you that you want this court to know? (1) (If youth has none, ask PO to suggest one.)	Do you have ideas about what you want to be in the future? Are you open to getting help with figuring it out and/or making a plan?	(Explain that assessment helps with decisions to get youth on track with a positive future self.) Do you understand what the assessment shows?	What do you think you need to do now? What do you think of PO recommendations? (Incorporate youth's ideas into your decision.)
Pretrial Hearing/ Disposition	What do you enjoy doing or interested in doing? (Listen for positive things to recognize.) (Note information in reports that reveal positive characteristics.)	Do you have ideas about what you want to be in the future? (If yes, try to get youth to share a few details. (2) If no, then encourage it and say PO will assist.)	You have strengths to become your ideal self. You have some barriers to your ideal self. (3) (Use assessment results for both. Involve youth in discussion.)	Were you involved in the case planning? Tell me about it. (4) (Discuss case plan with youth, ensuring they see connection between it and reaching ideal self.)
Probation Violation	Your violation slows you down in getting to your future ideal self. We believe you have what it takes to get back on track.	Let's talk about your ideal self and case plan for getting there. (Do this to underscore importance of correcting behavior.)	Do you understand your violation? Do you understand how it holds you back from your future ideal self?	What do you think you need to do now? This court will require actions because taking responsibility is part of reaching your ideal self.
Review Hearing	(Make positive observation about youth's efforts.) (Recognize progress.)	Are you still going after the same ideal self? (It is okay if youth has a new ideal self (7))	Do you feel you are on your way to your ideal self? What are some things you need help with?	What do you see happening over the next few weeks? Are the services working out for you?
				Gradual Progress Toward Ideal Self
				If Held: Use time in detention to get staff to help plan your future. If Released: You will get help to make a plan for your future.
				Try to describe something you might be doing when you reach your ideal self. (5) (Review case plan action steps and how they are the way to reaching their ideal self.)
				What are some things you have been able to get done. (Request PO to identify activity of interest to use as reward. (6))
				How do you think you've been doing? (Note progress toward ideal self. (8)) (Encourage the youth.)

Continued on following page

Some General Guidelines for Applying Principles of Adolescent Development in Delinquency Proceedings

(National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges)

- ✿ Make very clear, through tone, demeanor, and age-appropriate language that youth's growth is important.
- ✿ Clearly describe what will happen during a hearing.
- ✿ Ensure that youth have access to nurturing relationships with caring adults, physical and mental healthcare, education, job skills, and leadership and autonomous decision-making opportunities.
- ✿ Listen to what youth say and consider how their expressed opinion can shape the court's disposition and outcome.
- ✿ A youth is more likely to engage and comply when they identify their own strengths and needs.
- ✿ Check if youth can tell you what you just said they need to do before next court hearing. See if youth knows what will happen for them when they do those things.

Regulation and Well-Being: Avoidance Personal Goals, Avoidance Coping, Stress Generation, and Subjective Well-Being," *Journal of Personality*, June 2011)

- (1) Fostering a positive view of self reduces the likelihood of reoffending. As opposed to downplaying the youth's offense, recognizing something positive about the youth fosters "reintegrative shame" rather than "disintegrative shame." The former hinges on not measuring up to one's potential, which fosters growth. The latter hinges on seeing oneself as bad or flawed, which impedes growth. (Emma K. V. Levey, Claire F. Garandeau, Wim Meeus, and Susan Branje, "The Longitudinal Role of Self-Concept Clarity and Best Friend Delinquency in Adolescent Delinquent Behavior," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48, 2019)
- (2) This is a critical step in forming a positive identity. Making the youth's future only or primarily about "not doing that offense again" is counterproductive. Avoidance coping is detrimental to psychological well-being, predicts the occurrence of negative life events, and reduces one's ability to deal with new or unexpected conditions. (Elliot, Thrash, and Murayama, "Longitudinal Analysis of Self-
- (3) Use assessment process in a positive context of supporting self-discovery so as to reduce likelihood of assessment process reinforcing a negative sense of self: Seth J. Prins, "Criminogenic or Criminalized? Testing an Assumption for Expanding Criminogenic Risk Assessment," *Law and Human Behavior*, 43(5), 2019)
- (4) Involving youth in the case planning process activates critical executive function skills associated with increased capacity for intentional self-regulation. (Steinunn Gestsdottir and Richard M. Lerner, "Positive Development in Adolescence: The Development and Role of Intentional Self-Regulation," *Human Development*, 51, 2008)
- (5) Vivid mental image of ideal self reduces delinquency and it makes youth's ideal self "feel" closer and more attainable. (Jean-Louis Van Gelder, Eva C. Luciano, Marleen Weulen Kranenbarg, and Hal E. Hershfield, "Friends with My Future Self: Longitudinal Vividness Intervention Reduces Delinquency," *Criminology*, 53(2), 2015)
- (6) Integrating into conditions of probation things of interest to the youth and relevant to youth's ideal self (or future identity) supports self-regulation, which is essential during the community supervision period. (Daphna Oyserman et al., "An Identity-Based Motivation Framework for Self-Regulation," *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 2017, 28(2-3))
- (7) As youth continue to explore, they may change their minds several times. This is a part of development. What is important is that they are focused on their future, as "future orientation" is shown by research to reduce likelihood of reoffending.
- (8) It is important to see the community supervision period as an initial part of youth's effort to form a new identity, rather than simply as a "test period" for complying with conditions. (Chonogmin Na and Sung Joon Jang, "Positive Expected Selves and Desistance Among Serious Adolescent Offenders," *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology*, 2019, 5. "We found that a shift in a youth's expectation of positive self-identity in the future is significantly related to a downward trend in both offending and arrest outcomes.")

APPENDIX E

RFK National Resource Center

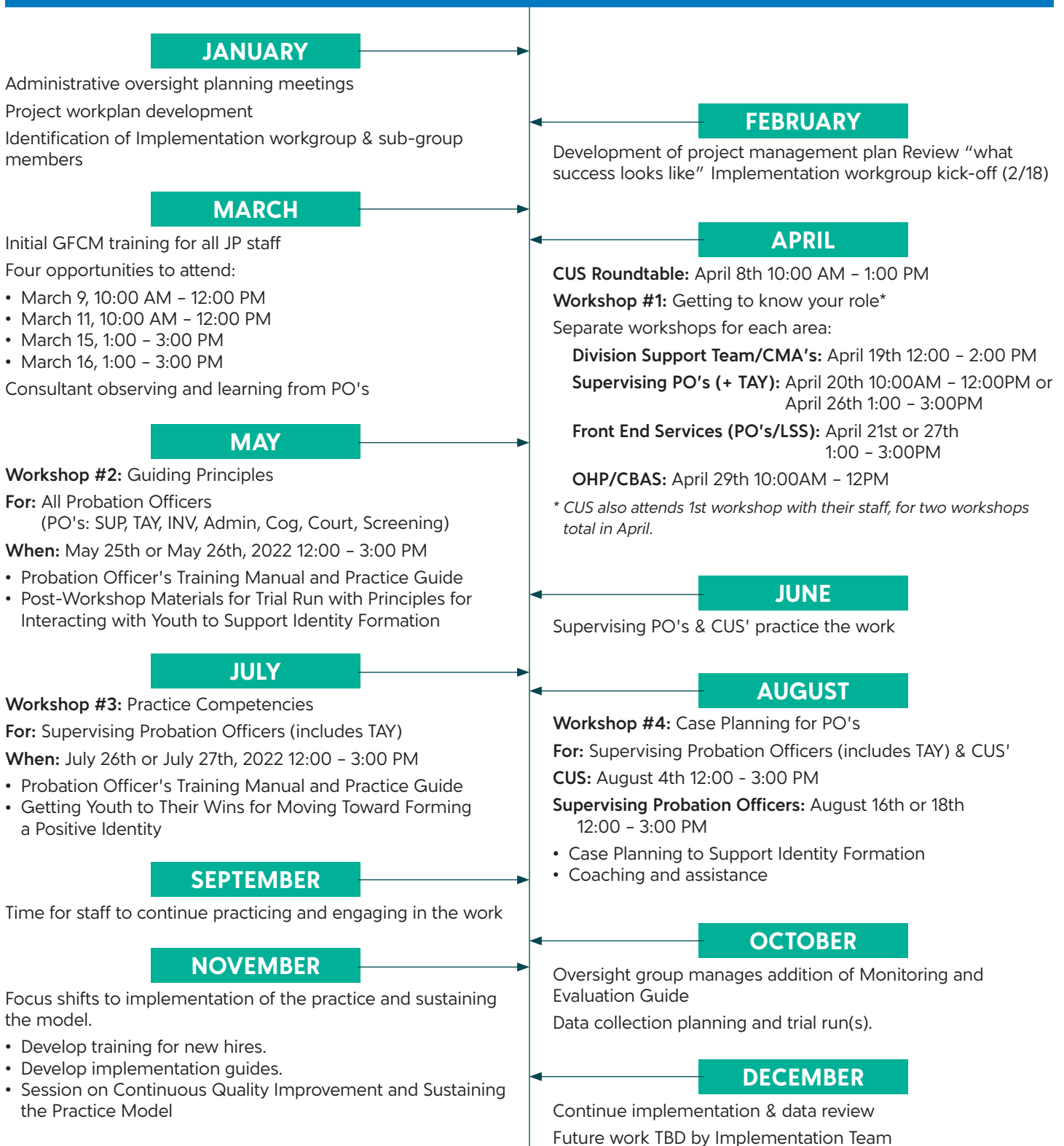
GFCM Training and Technical Assistance Process

TTA Stages and Milestones
Stage One: Establishing Administrative Oversight and Engaging Supervisors
Milestone 1: Consultation to define role of administrators in the training and technical assistance process and subsequent implementation efforts.
Milestone 2: Consultation to define role of supervisors in the training and technical assistance process and subsequent implementation efforts. One or more training workshops on the GFCM framework and initial development of supervision strategies during training process and implementation.
Stage Two: Principles of Growth-Focused Probation Practice
Milestone 3: Probation counselors gain understanding of the guiding principles and research base for GFCM and are able to conceptualize how the framework's growth facilitation competencies integrate with and enhance current practice. Training workshops planning and conducted as determined.
Stage Three: Mastering Competencies of Growth-Focused Probation Practice
Milestone 4: Series of training workshops followed by period of time for trial runs with the competencies. Competencies organized into three groups, including interaction competencies, identity formation competencies, and case planning competencies. Tailored to build on and integrate with agency's current practices.
Stage Four: Developing Growth-Focused Case Plans
Milestone 5: Consultation, technical assistance, and work sessions to assist probation counselors with formulating their approach to involving youth case planning and co-developing with them plans that support behavior change (i.e., primary desistance) and positive identity formation (i.e., secondary desistance). Tailored to build on and integrate with agency's current practices.
Stage Five: Quality and Sustainability of Growth-Focused Probation Practice
Milestone 6: Technical assistance with development of performance measures and outcomes measures. The latter based on a tailored approach to developing markers of desistance.
Milestone 7: Development and initial execution of agency implementation plan, utilizing lessons learned from trial runs with competencies by probation counselors.
Milestone 8: Technical assistance with sustainability strategies, including but not limited to intensive work with a small group of probation counselors (i.e., Practice Group) that can serve as coaches, and enhancement or development of policies and procedures.

APPENDIX F

GFCM Training and Technical Assistance Timeline: Hennepin County, Minnesota

Hennepin County, Minnesota Growth-Focused Case Management Timeline 2022



The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, a program of RFK Community Alliance, provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to serve local, state, and national leaders, practitioners, and youth-serving agencies to enhance system performance and improve outcomes for children involved with the youth justice system.

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