

Stepping Home: Standards of Excellence and Key Elements

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What is the Stepping Home Model?

Stepping Home is a process for all youth, starting from the beginning of a youth's confinement in a secure youth treatment facility (SYTF), to returning them safely and successfully to their communities as thriving, successful young adults. The model transitions the youth from the SYTF to less restrictive programs (LRP) to gradually increase their involvement in the community as they achieve the goals in their case plan until they are successfully home without supervision from county oversight agencies. While SYTFs provide maximum security and supervision, less restrictive programs gradually increase the youth's positive engagement in the community while decreasing supervision. Less restrictive programs can include camps and ranches, group living and cottages, and community living with supervision (e.g., living with family, independent living, college dormitories). The youth's transition from the most restrictive SYTF towards home should begin as soon as is reasonably possible consistent with public safety.

Stepping Home Model: Standards of Excellence

The Standards of Excellence are the core values of the Stepping Home Model that promote healing and accountability for youth dispositioned to SYTFs.

Standards:

- 1) The model adheres to research-informed practices that are conducive to healing, accountability, and rehabilitation.
- 2) The model prioritizes community safety.
- 3) The model is fully resourced in the best interest of the youth and the community.

Stepping Home - Standard of Excellence 1

The model adheres to research-informed practices that are conducive to healing, accountability, and rehabilitation: Approach must center youth, family, and community needs to transition youth through a continuum of least restrictive placements to home, with the goal of accountability, healing, and rehabilitation, to support the youth's successful reentry to their community.

- Advances equity to eliminate biases that have caused disproportionality and disparities, including among youth of color, youth who are gender expansive, youth who have physical and/or developmental disabilities, and their families in the youth justice system.
- Addresses the needs of the youth, not their offense(s)
- Rooted in principles of adolescent development
- Must be healing, trauma-informed, and therapeutic at all levels, including services and placements that are community based in the neighborhoods where the incarcerated youth come from
- Encourages meaningful ways for youth to take responsibility, make amends with victims and communities, and be leaders in the solutions that support families to help their children

Stepping Home – Standard of Excellence 2

The model prioritizes community safety: Approach must be grounded in **scientific and community evidence** with personal and system accountability.

- Utilizes healing and trauma informed evidence-based or evidence-informed services, restorative justice programs, interventions, and placements
- Elevates uniformity of assessment tools for judges, probation officers, behavioral health providers, educators and impacted youth, families, and community leaders to work in multi-disciplinary teams to design the best individualized plan that builds a continuum of care for justice-involved youth
- Applies rigorous implementation standards and ongoing assessment to evaluate effectiveness and ensure program fidelity
- Provides the correct level of supervision along the continuum from least restrictive to most restrictive placements

Stepping Home - Standard of Excellence 3

The model is fully resourced in the best interest of the youth and the community: Approach must be fully resourced in both community and carceral placements, moving toward a transformation of culture and infrastructure for youth to thrive at home in their communities.

- Leverages and supports existing innovation and programming in counties to prevent avoidable detentions.
- Encourages collaboration and partnership across counties, regions, and youth-serving systems, and among impacted youth, families, and communities
- Services must be robust and promote youths' wellness in all placements
 - Services should target: Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health; substance use; gang intervention; accountability; housing; vocational programming; education; and life skills training
- Supports community engagement, including through funding streams for implementing and overseeing Stepping Home and access to supporting youth in carceral placements

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

The Stepping Home Model provides key elements that comprise the core values outlined in the Standards of Excellence.

Counties and partnering entities are encouraged to include the key elements (as shown in the following slides) as they create their respective plans for youth dispositioned to SYTFs to ensure safe and successful transitions to their communities.



Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

1) Safe and secure facilities that protect youth from harm and abuse by promoting a culture and environment of dignity and respect.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

2) Professional neuro-psychosocial assessment to identify underlying trauma, developmental needs, behavioral health treatment needs, and unmet social needs contributing to behavior that led to justice system involvement, coupled with targeted healing, trauma-informed, and therapeutic intervention(s) by qualified professionals and paraprofessionals.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

3) Whole person case plan development utilizing family and community support teams that addresses the youth's physical health needs as identified by their assessment and includes full access to healthcare, including vision care and dental care such as orthodontia.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

4) Treatment(s) and supportive services as identified by the assessment and whole person case plan, including but not limited to interventions that address substance use and mental health, administered with fidelity to quality, dose, and duration.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

5) Restorative programming that promotes youth accountability for their offense(s) and builds and maintains positive relationships and behavior, including but not limited to victim awareness, personal insight, and restorative justice programs.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

6) A cohort model that promotes positive youth development by connecting youth to others going through the same transition, providing motivation through peer support, celebrating milestones, and exposing youth to pro-social experiences.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

7) Strengths based, healthy living and support activities for positive youth development that are strengths-based (e.g., opportunities for healing and spirituality, quality and age-appropriate education, outdoor time, leisure time, and opportunity to move from the facility to the community to attend school, work, and family and community events like funerals, births, and weddings pre-release).

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

8) Mentorship through trusted/credible messengers with lived experience throughout continuum of Stepping Home, including ongoing check-ins and feedback from youth regarding their treatment and programming.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

9) Pre-release engagement with community health and resources that address the social determinants of health through Medi-Cal enrollment and Enhanced Care Management services to ensure continuity of full access to healthcare upon release to community and home living.

Key Elements of the Stepping Home Model

10) Release and warm transitions to community and home living that include comprehensive Wraparound services such as supported living programs, basic income assistance, continuing substance use and mental health support, educational and vocational placements, and transportation support. Comprehensive Wraparound services for youth nearing 26 years of age or older with significant mental health needs can be fulfilled using Full-Service Partnership (FSP) programs.

Wrap-Up

Q&A

Thank you!