YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION — LEVEL 2 PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT

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Welcome to the National Fire Academy's (NFA's) "Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention — Level 2" (YFPI-2) course. The course will empower you with the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to perform the job performance requirements (JPRs) of a Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist (YFIS) Level 2 program leader as outlined in NFPA Standard 1035.

Level 2 program leaders help develop, implement, lead and evaluate a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program. In addition, the program leader must be proficient in **all** of the skills required for a Level 1 intervention specialist. For that reason, it is highly suggested that you attend the YFPI Level 1 course prior to enrolling in a Level 2 offering.

The target audience for this course is anyone who will perform leadership duties within a YFPI program. Leaders can be volunteer and career firefighters, fire investigators, Fire and Life Safety Educators (FLSEs), and allied professionals from criminal justice, mental health, social services and juvenile justice.

The outcome of the Level 2 course is the development of **draft** program operating procedures for a YFPI program that will serve the needs of your community. Because the most effective programs include collaboration from an interagency task force, we urge you to invite members of key agencies that may support your effort to attend this course with you — most specifically, those listed as allied professionals in the previous paragraph. At a minimum, you must have an idea of key agencies and people whom you will likely ask to help create a program or enhance an existing one.

To achieve the optimal benefits of the course, we ask that you perform research in advance of the course. Please come prepared to utilize the following information pertinent to your community and organization:

- Is your community urban, suburban, rural or a mixture?

- How many youth firesetting incidents does your organization handle per year?

- What types of youth firesetting incidents do you handle the most frequently?

- Are there areas of your community where incidents of youth firesetting occur more frequently? If so, where?

- Are there particular age groups that represent a greater problem than others? If so, please identify them.

- What is the minimum age at which your jurisdiction can file criminal charges against a youth for fire-related incidents?

- If charges can be filed, what is the average number of youth who are charged per year?

- On average, how many injuries caused by youth firesetting does your community experience per year? How many deaths?

- On average, how much property loss is associated with youth firesetting per year?

- If your organization currently has a YFPI program, please bring copies of the various documents that are utilized to support it, such as:

    - YFPI program mission statement.
    - Intake and screening forms.
    - Lesson plans for youth firesetting educational interventions.
    - Program operating procedures.
    - Release of information and consent forms.
    - Confidentiality agreements and waivers of liability.
    - Budget.

    Note: If your organization has a YFPI program, you will have the opportunity to recommend enhancements that can be made to strengthen it.

- You should also be cognizant of the educational programs offered by your organization that feature content aimed at reducing the occurrence of youth firesetting and the resources that are invested into the programs.

- If your organization currently has a YFPI program, what agencies are you already working with to collaborate on the disposition of youth firesetting cases?

- If your organization does not have a program, please consider what local agencies you should be collaborating with and whom from those agencies you should be working with.

- Who are the people from your organization who are (or should be) involved with the components of the YFPI program? The following are examples:

    - Identification of youth in need of services.
    - Intake of youth/families.
    - Screening process.
    - Educational interventions.
    - Follow-up to program services.
    - Program service evaluation.

- Please also bring a copy of your organization's overall mission statement.

You are encouraged to bring a laptop or other electronic device that will allow you to process class activities. It is also important to bring a storage device such as a thumb drive so you can exchange information with peers.

Because of the amount of information that will be shared, the NFA would like you to read the text content of the Student Manual (SM) in advance of attending the course. Doing so will better prepare you to participate in class discussions and networking opportunities with peers. The SM text is included with this pre-course packet.

Multiple activities will be included in each unit of the course, and there is a robust amount of appendix material for your future use. You will get this material when you arrive in class.

And finally, if you don't already have one, please obtain an NFA student identification (SID) number prior to attending the course. Directions on how to obtain your personal SID number are available at https://edp.dhs.gov/femasid.

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UNIT 1:
LEADING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

1.1   *The students will be able to summarize the overall job performance requirements (JPRs) of a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program manager.*

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

1.1   *Discuss desirable leadership traits of a YFPI program manager.*

1.2   *Describe current trends in youth firesetting.*

1.3   *Discuss the typologies of firesetting and common factors that influence firesetting behaviors.*

1.4   *Characterize the youth firesetting problem in their home community and strategies that have proven successful in addressing the problem.*

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I. LEADING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A. A job performance requirement (JPR) of a program manager is the ability to develop and lead a local program.

B. Leading a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program can be a challenging yet important and rewarding position.

C. The position carries tremendous responsibility because the manager often has authority (or co-responsibility with the youth firesetting interagency task force) to make final disposition of how youth firesetting cases are processed.

D. The job is both proactive and reactive in nature. While the ultimate goal is to prevent youth firesetting incidents, the program manager must ensure that policies and procedures are in place to handle all profiles of firesetting situations. This requires vision, leadership and mastery of a diverse set of skills.

E. The ultimate job of the YFPI program leader is to ensure that youth firesetting risks in the community are addressed both efficiently and effectively.

F. The manager needs to have a professional skill set so that he or she is competent in the following roles:

1. Program leader or administrator.

2. Excellent organizer and communicator.

3. Mentor.

4. Politician.

5. Problem-solver.

6. Visionary.

G. As learned in the Level 1 course, the most effective risk-reduction strategies are those that employ a broad-based, integrated approach utilizing a combination of prevention interventions.

H. The goal of utilizing multiple interventions in parallel is twofold:

1. Prevent incidents from occurring.

2. When prevention fails, reduce (mitigate) the impact of the incident.

I.   It is a JPR for the program manager to possess the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to help design the interventions that will be utilized as part of the YFPI program.

J.   Prevention interventions include:

1.   Education.

   a.   Public education builds the foundation for use of integrated prevention strategies.

   b.   However, if utilized as a stand-alone intervention, education can be a weak strategy.

   c.   Informing constituents of the youth firesetting issues that are impacting, or have potential to threaten, the local community.

   d.   Teaching the community how the risk develops and what they can do to help prevent it and/or mitigate its impact.

   e.   Creating a sense of urgency through the use of a fact-based rationale that explains why youth firesetting is serious and how a combination of preventive interventions can be utilized for prevention/mitigation.

   f.   Demonstrating the advantages of utilizing a multifaceted approach to prevention and mitigation that ultimately results in a safer community.

2.   Engineering.

   a.   Engineering can help create passive protection that requires no action on the part of people.

   b.   Sprinkler systems, fire-resistive building construction and child-resistive lighters are examples of passive equipment.

   c.   Public policy can mandate the use of engineering and technology so that prescribed preventive standards are met.

   d.   It can also require ongoing maintenance/servicing of equipment to ensure its effectiveness.

   e.   Investigating how a living environment could be modified so prevention and/or mitigation are accomplished is also an example of engineering.

f.   Examples include:

-       Presence of working smoke-detection systems.

-       Integrated systems that automatically notify the emergency services when incidents occur.

-       Automatic suppression systems.

-       Reduction of combustible materials in high-risk situations.

g.   Explore how technology can be utilized to enhance safety.

-       Use of child-resistive lighters by parents.

3.   Enforcement.

a.   Enactment of public policy and its application/enforcement can be a very powerful prevention component because it can be mandated or prohibited.

b.   Those who apply/enforce policy should be trained that they are public educators first, enforcers second.

c.   Voluntary compliance of a policy or code should be the ultimate aim of an enforcement agency.

d.   Voluntary compliance is the most effective proof that the community has developed buy-in to a policy because it demonstrates that people understand and approve its existence.

e.   There is a definite place for enforcement when addressing blatant noncompliance with conditions set by an YFPI program or when acts of firesetting occur.

f.   The mindset toward public policy of both the program manager and task force can set the tone for community trust and future successes in prevention/mitigation of youth firesetting.

g.   Demonstrate professional enforcement practices that reflect positively on the YFPI program.

4.   Economic incentives.

This entails working to incorporate incentives (both positive and negative) that support youth firesetting risk reduction.

      a.   Positive incentives reward constituents for proactive behavior or provide free/low-cost services to support life safety.

      b.   Negative incentives penalize people for infractions of adopted public policies and may include civil and criminal sanctions.

5.   Emergency response.

      a.   Support the existence of an adequately staffed, equipped and trained group of emergency responders that can rapidly respond to incidents of firesetting.

      b.   This response team not only includes firefighters who respond to incidents, but also staff members such as investigators and allied agencies that support program referral/intake services.

K.   It is the responsibility of the program manager to work with his or her organization and community to identify local youth firesetting priorities, and address them in a **strategic** manner.

II.   DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP MINDSET

A.   The program manager may come from one of several professions including, but not limited to:

1.   Fire service.

2.   Law enforcement or youth justice agencies.

3.   Mental health or social services.

4.   School system.

5.   Other allied agencies.

B.   Whatever the profession of the program manager, most who assume command of the YFPI program quickly realize that developing the right mindset is essential.

C.   The mindset/attitude of an effective and efficient program manager should include:

1.   Effective and efficient risk reduction must follow a strategic process.

      a.   The leader of the prevention unit must visualize the "big picture" of community risk reduction.

b.   The process begins with a comprehensive community risk assessment to identify and prioritize the local youth firesetting problem.

c.   It continues as the interagency task force defines the highest priorities and root causes of the local problem. A well-defined problem is a problem half-solved.

d.   Interagency task force members should represent a diverse group of agencies (stakeholders) who bring various experiences and perspectives to the process.

e.   Once the magnitude of the local youth firesetting problem has been identified, risk sequencing is utilized to study how the various profiles of firesetting develop and occur. It is at this point that a discussion of what combination of prevention interventions to employ occurs.

f.   As stated repeatedly, the most effective and efficient strategy entails the use of combined prevention interventions that have been suggested and are supported by the interagency task force.

2.   The program manager must create an environment that portrays participating in the process of YFPI as an elite responsibility, and the program must be selective about who it chooses as members.

3.   Effective leaders understand the strengths and challenges of their team members.

4.   This attribute becomes very important when the program manager is supervising a group of Level 1 intervention specialists.

Proficient leaders invest time to learn the interests and attributes of team members. They will help team members grow by facilitating continuing education and skill-building opportunities.

5.   Budget preparation and management skills are essential for building, sustaining and advancing a YFPI program.

a.   Every program must have a budget.

b.   Program managers, in cooperation with the interagency task force, are responsible for developing and managing a budget that supports the goals and objectives of the YFPI program.

c.   Youth firesetting intervention specialists must have the basic tools that are needed to perform their duties safely, effectively and efficiently.

d.   The organization and community's budget cycle and spending procedures must be understood.

e.   More information on budgeting will be provided in Unit 2.

6.   Understand that YFPI programs can be "resource-challenged."

a.   The recent economic recession (crisis) proved that even important programs like YFPI efforts are not immune from staffing cuts, reductions in services provided, and even elimination.

b.   Citizens demand basic services from their local government such as working public utilities, trash collection and police protection.

c.   In an era of economic challenges, when pressed to prioritize funding of local government services, many decision-makers have had to make tough choices on spending priorities.

d.   Not only did firefighters get laid off in some communities, but many departments also lost a portion (or in some cases all) of their prevention units.

e.   Leaders of YFPI programs must embrace the mindset that we must do a better job of justifying the essential function of our services.

-     Program leaders, cooperatively with their interagency task force, must commit to developing a strategic evaluation plan so that every function of the program is measured for both impact and efficiency.

-     The worth of YFPI must be proven, not just stated. This is best accomplished through a comprehensive program evaluation that begins the minute an idea for a prevention program is conceived and continues throughout its life cycle.

-     It is important for key stakeholders in the community to be engaged in the YFPI program evaluation process. They are the clients who will influence the political decision of worth.

- The leader must understand the importance of investigating and pursuing creative methods of revenue generation to support his or her unit.

- The leader must also realize that service agencies like fire and police departments are often looked upon as an expense and not as a revenue-generating source.

- Again, the mindset: The YFPI program must prove that they are saving the community money in property tax revenues through a reduction of incidents or events that occur with less severity because of proactive prevention/mitigation strategies.

7.   Participation in the local political process is not only a reality, it is essential.

   a.   If an interagency task force proposes public policy or applies specific sanctions, its leader must understand and be adept at participating in the local political process.

   b.   This requires understanding the local process of proposing policy and issue resolution.

   c.   It also requires a keen analysis of the local political environment and how to participate in an effective manner.

   d.   Political environments are dynamic and constantly changing/ evolving. The leader must be able to forecast, recognize and adapt to a changing environment.

8.   The program manager must have a positive working relationship with the chief administrators of partner agencies and political leaders, as well as administrators from other government agencies and community groups.

   The ability to communicate, collaborate, negotiate and compromise are traits that have been mastered by those who lead effective YFPI programs.

9.   Commitment, integrity and ethical behavior are essential.

   a.   A comprehensive YFPI program task force is often comprised of agencies/people who are responsible for enforcing fire, criminal and child-protective laws.

  b. This responsibility brings with it the reality of liability in case ethics violations or acts of gross negligence take place. Failure to accept this responsibility and act accordingly may result in program derailment.

 10. Professional development provides opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills so that the program leader is adequately prepared to address his or her JPRs.

III. TRENDS IN FIRESETTING AND THE KINDS OF FIRES SET BY YOUTHS

A. Youth firesetting facts.

 1. According to NFPA, the majority of youth firesetting incidents (77 percent) occur outdoors.

 2. However, 92 percent of deaths associated with youth firesetting occur in home structure fires (Hall, 2010).

  a. Most child-related home fires are started with lighters or matches. (Hall, 2010).

  b. Almost half (42 percent) of child-related home structure fires begin in the bedroom. The most commonly lit items in these fires are mattresses, bedding and clothing (Flynn, 2009).

 3. One very noteworthy fact is that, even though we have been discussing young children as firesetters, statistically speaking, youth between the ages of 11 and 14 are at the greatest risk for setting fires.

 4. Boys are at the greatest risk for setting fires. Annually, 80 to 85 percent of the identified firesetters are male (Boberg, 2006).

 5. Times, days and months of youth-set fires:

  a. There is no peak day for child-related home structure fires.

  b. Both home structure and outside fires involving youth peak in the after-school hours before dinner time (Flynn, 2009).

  c. Youth fire incidents peak during the month of July.

  d. One out of every four youth-related incidents that occurred outside was in the month of July.

     e.   More than two out of every three (67 percent) outside and other type of youth-related incidents in July involved fireworks (Flynn, 2009).

6.   Fireworks and fires.

     a.   The risk of fireworks injury was the highest for teens ages 15 to 19 and children 5 to 9, both with at least 2 1/2 times the risk of the general population (Hall, 2010).

     b.   Two out of five (40 percent) people injured by fireworks were under the age of 15 (Hall, 2010).

7.   The good news about child-set fires:

     a.   Since 1980, all child-related structure fires have decreased 79 percent, and home structure fires have decreased 81 percent (Flynn, 2009).

     b.   During the same period, civilian deaths caused by child-related fires have declined by 84 percent. Injuries have decreased by 61 percent (Hall, 2010).

     c.   Property loss (adjusted to inflation) has declined by 38 percent (Hall, 2010).

     d.   Outside and other fires have decreased 95 percent since 1980 (Flynn, 2009).

8.   In 1994, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) set a mandatory safety standard requiring the manufacturing and importation of cigarette lighters to be child-resistant.

9.   In a 2002 evaluation of the effectiveness of the 1994 CPSC lighter safety standard, CPSC found a 58 percent reduction in fires caused by children younger than five compared to children over the age of five (Smith and Greene, 2002).

10.   Youth firesetting and arson.

     a.   The crime of arson has the highest rate of juvenile involvement compared to all other crimes.

b.   According to the FBI, nearly half of all arson arrests in the U.S. are of juveniles under the age of 18. Nearly one-third of those arrested were under the age of 15, and 5 percent were under the age of 10 (FBI, 2006).

c.   In 2008, there were an estimated 6,600 juveniles arrested for arson in the U.S. Of those arrested, 56 percent were under age 15, and 12 percent were female (OJJDP, 2009).

d.   Following a 19 percent decline between 2006 and 2008, the juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2008 reached its lowest point since 1980 (OJJDP, 2009).

11.   School fires.

a.   The most deadly school fire in American history occurred on Dec. 1, 1958, at Our Lady of the Angels parochial school on Chicago's West Side. Three nuns and 92 students were killed.

b.   The fire was started by an angry student.

12.   Causes of school fires:

a.   Structure fires in preschools and day care centers are predominantly due to cooking (64 percent), followed by heating (7 percent) and electrical distribution (6 percent) (FEMA, 2007).

b.   The causes for fires in kindergarten or elementary schools mostly involve cooking (27 percent), incendiary or suspicious activity (25 percent), and heating (12 percent) (FEMA, 2007).

c.   The primary cause of fires in middle, junior or senior high schools is due to incendiary or suspicious activity (47 percent), followed by cooking (15 percent) and heating (7 percent) (FEMA, 2007).

13.   Time, day and month of school fires.

a.   According to the National Fire Data Center (NFDC), overall, the average peak month for school fires was July. The lowest incidence of school fires occurred between December and February (FEMA, 2007).

b. The NFDC states that the sharp increase in July school fires is driven by the number of elementary school fires. This suggests that elementary schools may be more attractive targets for incendiary or suspicious fires during the summer when fewer staff members monitor the school campuses (FEMA, 2007).

c. Middle, junior and senior high schools had more fire incidents in the fall and spring, which mark the beginning and end of the school year (FEMA, 2007).

14. Where school fires start:

a. The three leading areas where school fires begin are the bathroom, kitchen and small assembly areas (FEMA, 2007).

b. Twenty-five percent of all school structure fires begin in bathroom trash cans, and they are of incendiary or suspicious nature (FEMA, 2007).

c. Seventy-eight percent of all school bathroom fires occur in middle, junior and senior high schools (FEMA, 2007).

15. It is very important that all YFPI program staff have a good working relationship with the schools and school district(s) in their community.

There has to be an element of trust formed between the youth firesetting intervention program and the school personnel, or the school personnel will be reluctant to contact the youth firesetting intervention program staff, the fire department, and law enforcement if there is a school fire situation.

16. Many schools and school districts fear that if they report school fires, it will damage their reputation and cause the fear in their community that their school is a "bad" school, thus lowering the school's or district's rating. This might result in a loss of funding opportunities.

B. Youth use of explosive and pressure-creating devices.

1. Youth have experimented with constructing and using incendiary/ explosive/pressure-creating devices for decades.

2. Experimentation and purposeful acts of destruction have expanded dramatically as a result of easy access to information.

3. Youth have easy access to instructions on how to make/use devices.

4.   Many websites provide visual examples of youth engaged in dangerous behaviors involving incendiary/explosive devices.

IV.   TYPOLOGIES OF FIRESETTING

A.   From 2005 to the present, current youth firesetting researchers have expanded the typology categories to five because not all risk-taking firesetters fit into the category of troubled firesetting.

B.   These additions are due to the advent of social media, the Internet and cellular telephones.

C.   Today's youth firesetting typology categories include:

1.   Curiosity/Experimentation.

2.   Crisis/Troubled/Cry-for-help.

3.   Thrill-seeking/Risk-taking.

4.   Delinquent/Criminal/Strategic.

5.   Pathological/Severely disturbed/Cognitively impaired/Thought-disordered.

D.   The reason for the expansion of typology categories from three to five is because not all thrill-seeking firesetters fit into the delinquent category.

1.   It is very common for adolescents to engage in risk-taking behavior that includes fire; however, they would not all be considered delinquent.

2.   However, some firesetters set fires with willful intent to cause damage, conceal a crime or destroy evidence.

3.   In the past, both of the above profiles of firesetters would have been categorized as troubled. The separation of willful intent from thrill-seeking/risk-taking helps better clarify the motives behind the firesetting behaviors.

E.   Curiosity/Experimentation.

1.   Most children experience fire interest between the ages of 3 to 5.

2.   It has been estimated that curiosity-motivated firesetting represents greater than 60 percent of all fires set by children (NFPA and USFA).

3.   The curiosity-motivated firesetter is a child who is exploring his or her interest in fire through experimentation.

4.   Curious and experimental firesetting refers primarily to young children, ages 2 through 10. The median (average) age of a curiosity-motivated firesetter is 5 years old (IFSTA, 2010).

F.   Crisis/Troubled/Cry-for-help.

1.   Intentional firesetting may be influenced by cognitive, psychological or social problems. It can also be exacerbated by environmental factors such as access to ignition materials, lack of adult supervision, and family dysfunction.

2.   This type of firesetting is extremely dangerous because it often consists of a series of fire starts, both planned and/or spontaneous, that take place over several weeks, months or even years. The severity of fires may vary.

3.   In some cases, there is intent to destroy or harm specific property and/or people. Once a fire is started, the firesetter may not make an attempt to extinguish his or her fire or seek help. The fire acts as a symbol of a problem and signals a cry for help in response to a stressful life experience or abuse.

G.   Thrill-seeking/Risk-taking.

1.   In contrast to curiosity, some adolescent firesetters try to duplicate forms of dangerous behaviors seen in various mediums such as in person, through video gaming or on the Internet.

2.   Experimentation with fire, explosives and other pressure-creating devices (bottle bombs) can serve as the "ultimate" risk for adolescents engaging in thrill-seeking/risk-taking behaviors.

H.   Delinquent/Criminal/Strategic.

1.   What distinguishes the delinquent, criminal and strategic firesetters from thrill-seeking/risk-taking youth is the planned willful intent to cause destruction.

2.   Purposeful destructive firesetting by adolescents often targets fields, mailboxes, dumpsters and abandoned structures.

3. Delinquent firesetters often set fires, discharge fireworks or falsely activate fire alarms because of peer pressure, boredom or to show off. In many major cities, delinquent juvenile firesetting is often used as a rite of initiation for joining a gang.

4. Criminal and strategic firesetters may use fire to conceal a crime that has been committed.

I. Pathological/Severely disturbed/Cognitively impaired/Thought-disordered.

1. Left unaddressed, youth firesetting behaviors can transcend into a pathology of continuous fire starting.

2. Pathological firesetting is very disconcerting because the perpetrator uses fire as a means for receiving gratification without regard to others.

3. A pathological firesetter may start hundreds of fires for a plethora of reasons. The term "pyromania" refers to a pathology whereby a person sets many planned fires for pleasure or to release stress.

4. Pathological firesetters may have a high IQ. Their fires are often sophisticated, cleverly set, and cause significant damage.

5. The fires will have a distinct pattern and may serve as a type of ritual for the firesetter.

J. Not all firesetters have cognitive, behavioral or learning disorders.

1. Just because a youth firesetter has been diagnosed with a cognitive, behavioral or learning disorder does not necessarily mean that he or she is predisposed to set a fire or that the fire he or she set was caused by the disorder.

2. It is also important to remember that youth firesetting behavior can be influenced by the youth's social, cultural and environmental circumstances.

K. Four common factors that influence firesetting behavior.

While social, cultural and environmental circumstances may influence firesetting behaviors, empirical evidence identifies four common factors that directly contribute to youth firesetting behavior. These factors impact all typologies of firesetters and include:

1. Easy access to ignition materials.

2. Lack of adequate supervision.

3. A failure to practice fire safety.

4. Easy access to information on the Internet.

V. UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL YOUTH FIRESETTING PROBLEM

A. Understanding the youth firesetting problem in your community is the first step in developing your firesetting intervention program.

B. Collecting the available information on the youth firesetting problem in your community will demonstrate to the community the need for a firesetting intervention program and will answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographics of your community?

2. Who is setting fires in your community?

3. What kinds of fires are being set by youth?

4. What costs are associated with these fires (e.g., injuries, lives lost, property damage, loss of environmental resources, etc.)?

C. The pre-course assignment for YFPI required you to conduct research on the topics listed above.

D. Finding data on the occurrence and effects of youth firesetting at the local level may have been a challenging process.

E. As a program manager, you must have mastery understanding of the extent of your local youth firesetting problem.

F. You must create a factual rationale for why a YFPI is needed or why an existing program should be expanded.

VI. SUMMARY

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UNIT 2:
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

2.1   *The students will be able to develop a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program in their home community.*

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

2.1   *Analyze their department's or agency's mission to see if it supports a YFPI program.*

2.2   *Select potential partners and interagency task force members.*

2.3   *Describe the roles of the coordinating agency and interagency task force.*

2.4   *Determine the administrative and program tools required to operate a successful YFPI program.*

2.5   *Develop a draft of YFPI program operating procedures.*
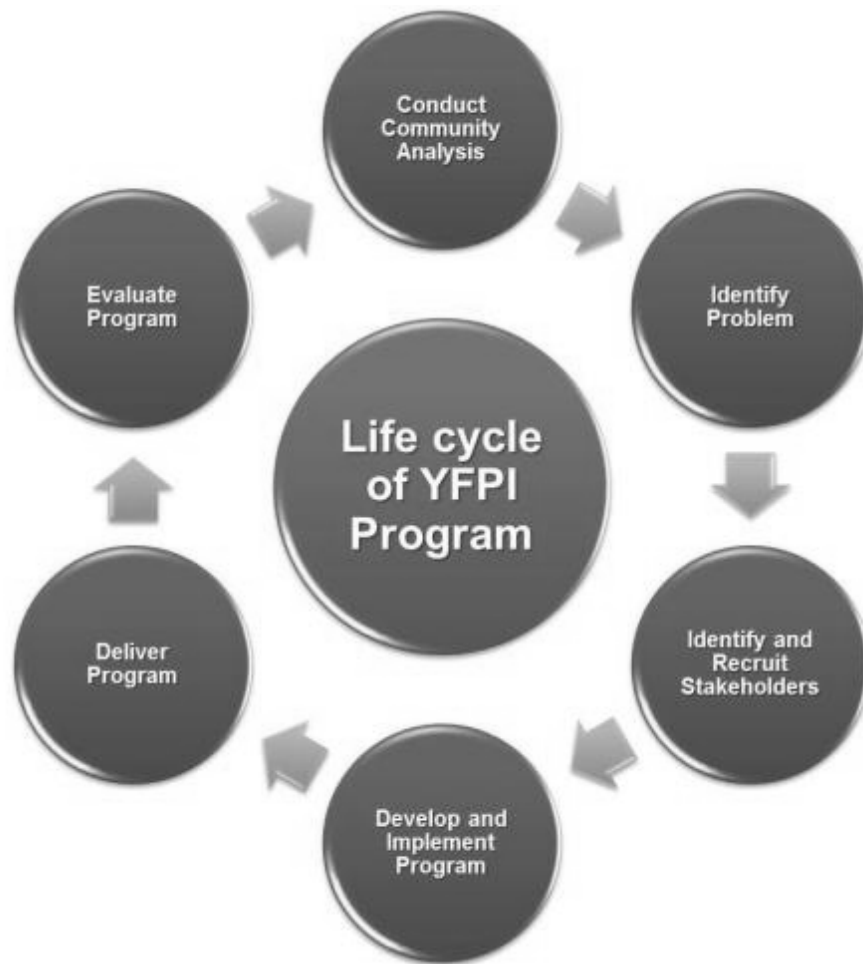
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I.   ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

A.   Most fire departments have a mission statement that drives the goals, objectives and services delivered by their organization.

B.   If prevention is an institutionalized value of an organization, it will be included in the mission statement and supported by the department at large.

C.   Institutionalized support for risk reduction means that an organization provides substantive resources in the form of time, attention, people and funding.

D.   While it may not be specifically mentioned, youth firesetting intervention should be a component of the prevention strategies offered by an organization.

E.   Developers of a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program should ensure that it corresponds with the mission of the organization.

F.   If a YFPI program corresponds with the organization's mission, it is more likely to be supported by all levels of the fire department and receive the support it requires.

II.   DEVELOP A TASK FORCE

A.   National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1035, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, and Juvenile Firesetter Intervention*, calls for a YFPI program manager to exhibit proficiency at leading the development of a YFPI program.

B.   The leader must understand how a YFPI program is developed, implemented, operated and evaluated. The process is displayed in the following graphic:

C.   Risk assessment is the first and most important step toward identifying the scope of a local youth firesetting problem.

A good assessment will help:

1.   Identify who is setting fires, how, where and why.

2.   Identify logical target populations to receive services.

3.   Locate hidden, hard to reach or underserved populations.

4.   Identify high-risk occupancies, populations and neighborhoods.

5.   Build a foundation to suggest use of integrated prevention interventions (five E's).

D.   A community risk assessment explores problem- and people-related data.

1. Problem-related data evaluation examines the occurrence of incidents.

    a. How often youth firesetting incidents occur (frequency).

    b. Who is causing the youth firesetting problem, as well as how, where and why it is occurring.

    c. Whether occurrences of incidents are rising or falling.

    d. Where incidents occur and who they affect (geographic distribution).

    e. When incidents occur (time, day, month).

    f. Specific youth firesetting trends such as age, gender, special needs.

    g. Physical threats from risk:

        -   Number of injuries.

        -   Loss of life to civilians and emergency service staff.

    h. The economic impact of incidents, both to the community and emergency services.

    i. An objective analysis of problem-related data will include a vast amount of quantitative data that has been collected over an extended period of time.

2. People-related data evaluation explores the human component of involvement and factors associated with vulnerability to juvenile firesetter incidents. It will include the demographics of the local community.

    Information to examine includes:

    a. Population size of the community.

    b. How the population is distributed throughout the community.

    c. Gender profiles and age distribution of people throughout the community.

    d. Family sizes and structures.

    e. Distribution of racial and ethnic groups.

      f.   Emerging and/or shrinking populations.

      g.   Income and education levels of people.

      h.   Employment and school system demographics.

      i.   Sources that support the city/community's tax base.

      j.   Risk factors such as poverty, population transience and disabilities.

      k.   Location and distribution of confirmed (or potential) high-risk populations, occupancies and neighborhoods.

E.   Upon determination that a YFPI program is needed, the fire department (or lead agency) should invite other community agencies to join in the program design and implementation process.

F.   This multidisciplinary approach will lend itself to ensuring the success of the program.

G.   Many jurisdictions refer to their multidisciplinary team of stakeholders as an interagency task force.

H.   It is important to identify/recruit a core group of primary stakeholders who may have interest in the issue of youth firesetting.

I.   Stakeholders should have a strong interest in youth firesetting so that actions of the task force, and therefore the intervention program, are successful.

J.   It may be appropriate to include community leaders who have influence or power or are part of the community's political network.

III.   THE COORDINATING AGENCY

A.   There must be an agency that ultimately leads a YFPI task force.

B.   All agencies on the task force must agree as to which is serving as the lead organization.

C.   The agency that agrees to serve as lead must ensure that its leaders are supportive of this responsibility.

D.   The other agencies represented on the task force must commit to support the lead agency as necessary. It takes all facets of the community to successfully intervene with firesetting behavior.

E.   Fire department's role.

Whether or not the fire department serves as lead agency, its role and function should include:

1.   Conducting interviews with youth firesetters and their families (following training in the use of approved forms and the screening process).

2.   Providing firesetting education intervention.

3.   Referring children and families to appropriate agencies according to the team's predetermined protocol.

4.   Interfacing with police and the juvenile justice system.

5.   Maintaining awareness of legal issues surrounding the program implementation.

6.   Keeping the program visible to the community.

7.   Seeking ongoing support and information through local, state and national networking.

F.   Responsibilities of the lead agency include:

1.   Obtaining administrative approvals from all partner agencies.

2.   Providing leadership in program development, implementation and expansion.

3.   Identifying, allocating and helping to seek resources.

4.   Initiating and supporting interagency cooperation and partnerships.

5.   Ensuring that the community has a central point of contact for the program.

6.   Ensuring that a secure central location for data collection and processing exists and is maintained.

7.   Helping to market the program.

IV.   ROLES OF THE INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE

A.   It is the responsibility of the interagency task force to build a YFPI program that serves the needs of its local community.

B.   When developing a youth firesetting program, typical duties of a task force include:

1.   Identifying/Clarifying the scope of the youth firesetting problem through collection and analysis of local data.

2.   Locating and reviewing existing youth firesetting program models from other communities.

3.   Considering using/adapting the format of other youth firesetting program models or creating a model specific to local needs.

4.   Determining a leadership and management structure for the program.

5.   Developing a mission statement for the YFPI program that creates a foundation and direction for all program services.

6.   Designing an organizational chart illustrating the operation of the program.

7.   Specifying the relationship between organizations and the service delivery system that will be offered.

8.   Identifying community resources such as the youth justice system, counseling services, and school- and community-based support services that will be included as part of the program.

9.   Establishing a referral mechanism for all organizations involved so each youth firesetting case is assessed appropriately.

10.   Developing a plan so each youth firesetting case receives a follow-up evaluation.

11.   Determining legal aspects of the program, such as confidentiality, parental consent, liability, mandated referrals, etc.

12.   Creating or adapting the tools necessary for the program. This includes forms to be used for intake, interview, referral and follow-up services.

13.   Determining training needs, especially for those who will be utilizing the screening documents.

14.   Designing a data collection system.

15.   Designing an evaluation process for the overall program.

16.   Determining required resources and a resource acquisition strategy.

17.   Designing and implementing a marketing campaign to inform the community about the youth firesetting problem and program.

V.   PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A.   Oftentimes, it is the fire department that serves as lead agency for a YFPI task force.

B.   Whoever the YFPI program manager may be, he or she must possess the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to lead the process of developing the program components needed to successfully operate a program.

C.   The task force (often led by the program manager) is responsible for ensuring that the program components (and accompanying tools) are valid, utilized according to protocol defined by the task force, and working effectively/ efficiently.

D.   Program components/tools include:

1.   Mechanisms for identifying youth firesetters.

2.   Intake process.

3.   Screening process.

4.   Intervention strategy(s).

5.   Follow-up mechanism.

VI.   IDENTIFYING YOUTH FIRESETTERS

A.   There are multiple ways that children involved in fire incidents come to the attention of a youth firesetting program:

1.   Parents/Caregivers.

2.   Schools.

3.   Law enforcement; juvenile justice; courts and attorneys.

4.   Mental health agencies.

5.   Social and child protective services.

6.   Fire service.

B.   Program managers are expected to possess the KSAs to help the task force develop protocol of how the identification of firesetters will occur.

1.   When building a new program (or enhancing an existing one), a logical strategy is to recruit agencies onto the task force that will likely serve as partners to identify firesetters.

2.   Utilizing this approach helps build strength for the task force so it is prepared to handle the various profiles of firesetting behavior.

3.   It also helps create a broad-based vested interest in the program from primary stakeholders.

4.   The local youth firesetting problem becomes the task force's (or community's) issue in lieu of just the fire department's problem.

C.   Once a youth firesetter is identified, the circumstances surrounding the firesetting situation are assessed during what is called an intake process.

VII.   DEVELOPING AN INTAKE PROCESS

A.   The intake process formally initiates the involvement of the youth and his or her parent(s)/careprovider into the firesetting intervention program.

B.   Intake is the process of collecting initial information about the youth firesetter, his or her family, and the incident(s) that brought the youth to the program (NFPA, 2010).

C.   A firesetting intervention program must have a consistent and reliable intake process that includes:

1.   What to do when a parent/caregiver asks for help.

2.   How to process a request for service from a partner agency.

3.   How to contact and obtain information from a family after a fire incident has occurred.

D.   Program managers are expected to possess the KSAs to help the task force develop protocol of how the identification of firesetters will occur.

E.   A successful youth firesetting intervention program must have an intake process that includes the following basic procedures:

1.　　Points of entry.

　　　The mediums of how the youth enters the program.

　　　a.　　Fire service — could include suppression staff, investigators, public educators or on-duty station/administrative personnel.

　　　b.　　Partner agencies — could include juvenile justice, social services, mental health, schools or other groups.

　　　c.　　All personnel that may have contact with the family of a youth firesetter must understand what to do if presented with a firesetting situation and how to initiate (or deliver) the intake component.

　　　d.　　Some programs train partner agencies to conduct the intake process. Others direct all referrals to the lead agency. This process may vary based on the lead agency for the interdisciplinary team.

2.　　Contact person(s).

　　　a.　　Intake personnel and their availability must be identified.

　　　b.　　Who in the program will be responsible for taking requests for service and/or contacting families?

　　　c.　　Will there be more than one person available to initiate the contact?

　　　d.　　Some programs have one contact person assigned per day, while others have one contact person available on a half-time basis or on call.

　　　e.　　It is the program manager's responsibility to ensure that all personnel who have potential to interact with a youth firesetter and his or her family have basic understanding of the protocol for how a request for help is processed.

　　　f.　　It is the program manager who helps the interagency task force develop such protocol.

　　　g.　　This protocol becomes especially important when a parent or caregiver walks into a fire or police station asking for help with addressing a youth firesetting incident/situation.

3.　　Reasonable response time.

Once a firesetter has been identified, there is a significant (but sometimes short) window of opportunity to provide services for these at-risk youth.

a. The best window of opportunity to provide successful intervention is immediately after the fire.

b. The program should establish what contact window of time is appropriate.

c. Ideally, **within 48 hours** of initial contact, the youth firesetting program should make contact with the youth and his or her family. This may be either in person or by telephone.

d. The YFPI program must have a defined protocol identifying who is responsible for making contact with the family and encouraging their participation.

4. Intake forms.

a. Intake forms should be used for each referral or complaint of youth firesetting behavior. The form should be standardized for the jurisdiction and designed to gather basic information about the youth, his or her family, and the fire event/situation that led to the program referral.

b. Deciding upon use/adaptation of an existing process being used in another jurisdiction (or creating a custom process) to fit local needs is a JPR of a program manager.

c. Program managers must ensure that all staff members who may perform intake duties are provided with the training to perform this important aspect of the program.

d. Depending on available resources and program protocol, the intake process may be handled by firefighters on a scene, a fire investigator, a receptionist/ administrative assistant or a member of the interagency task force.

e. Staffing requirements need to include key individuals who will provide the program's intake mechanism. Depending on the needs of the community, this may be a 24/7 on-call type of responsibility.

f. Individuals who perform intake should be able to articulate the purpose of the program and how it works.

g. The program manager and interagency task force members should identify points of intake, who will be utilizing the form, and what specific information is going to be obtained.

h. Intake forms may be in written or electronic format (or both).

i. When designing a format, it is important to consider not only who will be using the tool but what environment they will be working in when collecting information.

- A person collecting information via telephone may prefer to use a form.

- On-scene fire investigators or Company Officers (COs) may prefer an electronic medium to record information.

j. Regardless of the type of medium utilized, it must capture the same information.

k. In the case where an actual fire response or investigation was created by the firesetting incident, a departmental incident form should be attached to the intake form if it is available.

5. Prioritization of cases.

a. The intake protocol must also include directives for responding to urgent cases that require a more rapid intervention.

Examples of potential priority situations include:

- Prior history of firesetting.

- Multiple recent acts of firesetting.

- Firesetting in an occupied dwelling.

- High-risk profiles of firesetting.

- Special needs of firesetter and/or family.

- Severity of incident(s).

- Violation of criminal laws that mandate immediate action.

- Cases of suspected child abuse.

b. It is the responsibility of the program manager to lead the task force in creating guidelines for emergent actions and referral options.

c. There are special circumstances that can affect admission into a YFPI program.

d. If there is a violation of local, state or federal law, immediate referral to the local justice system may be mandatory.

e. The age of the child or youth involved must always be considered.

- Age of accountability is the minimum age at which state courts have ruled that a child is intellectually capable of understanding right from wrong and the consequences associated with inappropriate behavior (International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA), 2010).

- Depending on the state, age of accountability may vary, but for most places this age is between 7 and 9, though it can be as old as 12. It is the responsibility of program personnel to ensure that they are familiar with their state's age of accountability.

f. The nature and severity of the fire must be explored.

g. Firesetting acts that result in a large dollar loss and/or a loss of life may, by requirement, be referred to the juvenile justice system before any firesetting intervention takes place.

h. The firesetting history of the juvenile should be explored.

Many YFPI programs have strict guidelines on disposition of first-time versus repeat firesetters.

6. Client management.

a. For every child or youth who enters the program, there must be a record created that documents the firesetter's and family's participation (or lack thereof) in the intervention program.

b. While the use of electronic databases has increased the efficiency of this process, someone must be responsible for this process.

c. Poor (or lack of) record keeping/secure file maintenance is not only unprofessional, but it can also create a liability issue for the program.

VIII. DEVELOPING A SCREENING PROCESS

A. Once basic intake information about the youth firesetter, his or her family, and the fire incident (s) has been obtained, the next step is to perform a structured screening process.

1. A structured screening process that uses an approved screening instrument is a statistically reliable way to identify, record and evaluate factors contributing to a child's or youth's firesetting behaviors.

2. The ultimate goals of the screening process are to determine why firesetting is occurring, what satisfaction the juvenile receives from starting fires, and the risk level for future firesetting events.

3. The screening process entails interviewing the firesetter and his or her parents/caregiver(s).

4. The process allows for objective exploration of the factors that may have influenced the firesetting behaviors.

5. It also provides information about attitudes, behaviors, demographics and experiences of the youth/family that may present obstacles to the introduction of appropriate interventions.

6. The screening process should not be used as a determining factor for legal action.

7. Screening helps the interdisciplinary team members understand why firesetting has occurred and what types of intervention to offer.

B. YFPI programs that fail to conduct an accurate screening of why an act of firesetting has occurred may miss discovery of information that is (or could be) relevant in deciding what type of intervention to provide.

C. There are many reasons why accurate screenings (or any screening at all) may not occur:

1. Lack of time to perform the screening.

2. Lack of funding to compensate staff for the time required to perform screenings.

3.   Lack of staff members who are willing to invest the time into learning how to conduct screenings and then conducting them.

4.   Lack of training opportunities for staff.

5.   Competing organizational priorities.

6.   Fear of potential litigation against the organization/staff members who perform a screening.

D.   Developing and utilizing an interagency task force approach to case assessment is an excellent way to ensure that a valid screening of youth firesetting cases takes place.

E.   Because a task force is comprised of multiple agencies, it is often in a position to share and distribute resources that a single agency may not be able to do when acting alone.

1.   Fire investigators and police officers receive basic and often advanced levels of education on how to conduct interviews with people.

2.   Mental health practitioners can help those who do screenings to better understand the cognitive and behavioral challenges being faced by many firesetters and their families.

3.   Learning how to interview people and understanding the dynamics of the process is best accomplished through education and practice.

4.   The interagency task force approach to firesetting intervention can help provide both education and mentoring opportunities for staff members to enhance their ability to assess firesetting situations.

F.   When conducted by a trained intervention specialist, an approved screening process is the most effective way to obtain quantifiable indicators as to the risk for repeat acts of firesetting (recidivism).

G.   Screening instruments must be approved by qualified professionals (experienced in the field of firesetting intervention), the interagency task force, and the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

H.   Use of an approved process helps to ensure that information is obtained in a safe, ethical and reliable manner.

I.   The process is always coupled with the use of approved consent and waiver of liability forms.

J.   The screening process should occur in a timely manner. Youth firesetting program personnel should contact the parents/caregiver(s) to arrange for a screening interview of the firesetter and his or her family according to the time frame stated in the program protocol directive.

K.   The program manager must also lead development of protocol that directs where screenings take place. Options may include:

    1.   The office of program personnel or at a fire station.

    2.   The home of the firesetter.

        a.   If protocol is created that allows for home visits, those who conduct the screening may benefit by observing the youth and/or his family in their own environment.

        b.   A second benefit of home visitation is that it may help the individuals being interviewed feel more comfortable and potentially provide more information to the interviewer.

        c.   The primary decision of where to allow screenings rests with the program manager/interagency task force with provider safety being the ultimate consideration.

        d.   If home visits are permitted, protocol should mandate that staff members go in pairs.

        e.   Another consideration is to require staff to consult local law enforcement agencies about the safety of the specific neighborhood, call history to the firesetter's home, and who may reside there.

L.   If resources permit, a consideration may be to have a fire department staff member and representative from the interdisciplinary team (mental health practitioner, law enforcement representative, etc.) perform the screening as a team.

M.   It is a JPR for a program manager to possess the KSAs to help his or her interagency task force develop a valid, safe and ethical screening process.

IX.   THE SCREENING INSTRUMENT

A.   There are a variety of instruments (also referred to as screening tools or forms) available to provide the structure needed for an effective screening.

B.   Program managers are responsible for helping the interagency task force select (or create) an approved screening tool that meets their local needs.

C.   Practitioners use the screening form to guide them through the process of interviewing the firesetter and his or her parents/caregiver(s).

      1.   Screening forms follow a format whereby the practitioner (interviewer) poses a series of questions to the interviewee.

      2.   Responses to the questions are assigned a numerical value and scored as indicated by the form.

      3.   Once scored, most screening tools assign the level of potential risk for repeat firesetting into one of three categories: some, definite and extreme.

D.   It is important that screening forms are considered to be reliable. While "less" may look better, that is not always the case.

E.   Information on the screening forms should include:

      1.   Information about the firesetting incident and history of previously set fires.

      2.   Information about the youth: medical/mental health history, interests, developmental level, etc.

      3.   Social information, including behavior of the youth at home, school, with friends, etc.

      4.   Information about the family: activities, disciplinary practices, ability to relate with the youth, interest in the youth's welfare, concern for the youth and supervision of the youth.

      5.   Facts about the home environment: youth access to ignition materials, presence of life safety equipment and knowledge/practice of fire safety.

      6.   Recent changes in the youth's immediate situation, such as a recent trauma, divorce in the family, death of family members or friend, crisis at school, etc.

      7.   The screening process may also identify the perceived rewards for the firesetting incident(s), such as peer attention, approval, money or gratification.

F.   Selecting a screening form.

       1.   The local jurisdiction has several options regarding which screening form to use:

            a.   Utilize (with permission) the format of a form being used successfully by an agency.

            b.   Modify the format of an existing form being used successfully by an agency.

            c.   Create a custom form for the local community.

       2.   Remember, regardless of the option selected, screening instruments must be approved by qualified professionals (experienced in the field of firesetting intervention), the interagency task force, and the local AHJ.

G.   The decision of which form to use rests entirely with the youth firesetting intervention program and will depend on the program's service goals, available resources and desired outcomes.

X.   DESIGNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

A.   Once a level of firesetting risk has been determined, an appropriate intervention strategy can be developed.

B.   Both Level 1 intervention specialists and Level 2 program managers must have mastery understanding of the three recognized levels of firesetting risk that ascend in the following order: some, definite and extreme.

C.   The program manager and interagency task force are responsible for establishing intervention resources so that firesetting cases can be resolved in a safe, ethical, legal and effective manner.

D.   There are several categories for interventions that need to be developed by program leaders:

       1.   Educational intervention.

       2.   Mental health and/or social services referral.

       3.   Youth justice system referral.

XI.   EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

A.   A JPR of the Level 1 intervention specialist is to select and deliver the appropriate type of educational intervention to a youth firesetter and his or her family.

B.   It is the responsibility of the program manager to help facilitate the selection of (or even help develop) the educational materials that will be utilized by intervention specialists.

C.   When considering the selection (or development) of educational intervention strategies that will be utilized by intervention specialists, remember:

1.   Punishment alone does not teach a child about the dangers of fire.

2.   All children, youth, adolescents and adults benefit from the receipt of fire safety education.

3.   Program protocol should direct that educational intervention strategies attempt to include all members of the household where the firesetter resides.

D.   If you are leading the development of an educational intervention process, always consider the four common factors that influence firesetting behavior:

1.   Easy access to ignition materials.

2.   Lack of adequate supervision.

3.   Lack of practice of fire safety in the home.

4.   Easy access to information on firesetting and explosive construction on the Internet.

E.   Educational interventions should include the following topics:

1.   Fire safety — the basic rules of fire prevention and what to do if an incident occurs.

2.   Fire science — how fire behaves and why it can quickly get out of control.

3.   Consequences of firesetting — explanation of the local penalties that youth (and perhaps families) will face.

4.   Need for personal responsibility — clear expectations for both the youth and family so repeat firesetting does not occur.

5.   Need for good decision-making — explanation of cause and effect relationships with regard to firesetting.

F.   When developing educational intervention strategies for use by intervention specialists, the program manager must consider these important factors:

1.   Educational goals to be accomplished by the intervention.

2.   Specific needs of target group(s) to be served.

3.   Potential format(s) of the learning environment.

4.   Teaching materials that will be employed.

G.   A successful YFPI educational intervention will include the following types of resources:

1.   Instructional materials appropriate for the firesetter's age, cognitive abilities and type of firesetting incident(s).

2.   Support materials that are educationally and behaviorally sound.

3.   Support materials that are culturally sensitive and adaptable to fit special needs.

4.   Staff that can engage all age ranges of target populations in the educational process.

5.   Interactive learning experiences that help instructors engage target groups in the educational process.

6.   An adult education component that mirrors the education that the youth receives.

7.   Extension activities that parents can use at home with children.

H.   YFPI program formats.

1.   It is the responsibility of the program manager and interagency task force to determine the format for delivering the educational component of a youth firesetting intervention program.

2.   The formats made available depend on the types and amount of resources available to your program.

3.   Here are a wide range of options for educational intervention:

a.   A one-on-one intervention with the youth firesetter and his or her parents/caregivers.

b.   A one-on-one intervention with the youth firesetter separate from a one-on-one session with the parents/caregivers/guardians.

c.   Group sessions with multiple youth firesetters of similar ages and/or cognitive abilities and their parents/caregivers/guardians.

d.   Group sessions with multiple youth firesetters of similar ages and/or cognitive abilities and a separate group for parents/caregivers/guardians.

e.   If resources permit, it is recommended to separate the parents/caregivers from the firesetters.

f.   Reasons for having separate education sessions include:

-      Parents/Caregivers may dominate the conversation.

-      Parents/Caregivers may condemn other students when interacting with them in a group setting.

-      Parents/Caregivers may overpower the class and intimidate the students.

-      Youth should feel at ease to learn without the influence of the parents/caregivers.

g.   There is no set type of format that has been deemed better than others.

h.   The effectiveness of a program often depends on the interest, education, and experience of the firesetter intervention specialist and how the YFPI program is structured/delivered.

I.   Class length.

The length of time for a youth firesetting intervention also varies depending upon available resources:

1.   The intervention could be a program consisting of multiple one- to three-hour sessions, or it could be a one-time class lasting for two to six hours.

2.   Youth firesetting intervention specialists have used both formats with great success, depending on the resources they have available.

3. Determining factors are going to be the resources available to the intervention specialist and the availability of the parents or caregivers.

J. Class scheduling.

There are several ways that educational interventions are scheduled:

1. Monthly basis on a set day and time.

2. As needed when the intervention specialist receives a youth firesetting referral.

3. Some programs have multiple sessions scheduled on a specific day and time, on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis.

4. Some classes are scheduled on the availability of the youth firesetter and his or her family.

5. Individualized services for younger children and their families are often offered due to the age of the child.

K. The sooner that a youth firesetter and his or her family receive services, the greater the likelihood of successful intervention.

1. If an extended period of time exists between the firesetting incident and intervention (and there is no repeat firesetting), then parents, caregivers or guardians may feel that the child has learned his or her lesson and doesn't need to attend the program.

2. The more convenient it is for the youth firesetter and family to obtain services, the more likely they are to attend the program.

3. There are several ways of notifying and reminding parents/caregivers of the youth firesetting intervention class:

a. Telephone call the night before the class.

b. A letter sent the week before the class to remind the parents/ caregiver of the date, time and location.

c. An email reminding the parents/caregiver of the scheduled class.

d. Whatever medium is utilized, it is very important to remind the family of the scheduled class.

XII.   CLINICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICE REFERRAL

A.   When firesetting goes beyond curiosity or experimentation (or if there is repeat firesetting), it might be necessary to refer the family for mental health support.

B.   When intervention specialists encounter potential high-risk situations, protocols should direct immediate consultation with the program manager.

C.   It is the responsibility of the program manager to work in tandem with the intervention specialist to initiate a referral — in this case, to mental health professionals.

D.   The same action would occur if an intervention specialist suspects child neglect or that an abusive situation is occurring. The referral in this case would be to a social services agency.

E.   Social services agencies can often provide families with training in parenting/caregiving skills, anger management, or dealing with a particular loss or change in lifestyle. Clinical staff may be able to help with referrals for these services.

F.   Child protective services (youth and family services) or whatever the unit is called that handles child abuse/neglect situations should be a partner that collaborates with youth firesetting cases.

G.   Parents and careproviders will often respond rapidly to the offer of intervention services when an enforcement-related division of the social system becomes involved.

H.   High-risk situations demand immediate attention; this is where interagency agreements become so important and will display their effectiveness.

XIII.   JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM REFERRAL

A.   Employing the strategy of invoking legal sanctions can help ensure that firesetters and their families participate in the YFPI program.

B.   While referral to a youth justice system may sound like a simple process, how (and when) it can be utilized will depend upon the laws and ordinances of the local jurisdiction.

C.   Sometimes the decision to recommend legal sanctions may not be in the control of the YFPI program.

D.   The decision to take this action may depend upon:

        1.   Violations of local or state laws.

        2.   Deaths, injuries or property loss associated with the firesetting.

        3.   Local operating procedures of the fire department.

        4.   Age of accountability.

        5.   Firesetting history of the youth.

E.   It is the responsibility of the interagency task force (that hopefully includes a member(s) of the youth justice system) to develop a protocol for when and how to initiate legal action.

F.   Once legal action is initiated, the defendant's civil rights must be recognized and honored. This means that the families must be informed of the decision, and juvenile Miranda rights must be read.

        1.   Miranda rights can only be legally performed by an authorized official.

        2.   Some fire departments are staffed with fire marshals who may have police powers; others may not have this capability and will require support from a law enforcement agency.

G.   The interagency task force must consult with the local district attorney regarding the protection of a juvenile's legal rights and to identify the agency(s) that will be available to initiate supportive actions.

XIV. FOLLOW UP

A.   It is the responsibility of the program manager to ensure that a follow-up mechanism is built into his or her program.

B.   Protocol should direct that follow-up contact be made with each family that participates in a youth firesetting intervention program.

C.   A primary follow-up should occur four to six weeks after completion of the program. A secondary follow-up can take place six to 12 months after close-out of the file.

D.   The protocol on how follow-up is conducted is often dependent on the level of resources available to the program. Options can include:

        1.   Telephone calls, which are the most cost-effective and least time-consuming.

2. Written contacts, including postcards, letters, surveys and electronic communication.

3. Home visits — these require the most resources but allow for a direct re-assessment of the firesetting problem.

E. While follow-up takes time and effort, it helps to reinforce program information and demonstrates that the youth firesetting team is truly interested in the well-being of the youth and his or her family.

XV. STAFF TRAINING

A. It is the responsibility of the program manager to ensure that an adequate number of trained staff members are in place to deliver program services.

B. Every person who is approved to provide program services must possess the KSAs commensurate to the specific JPRs for his or her assigned duties.

C. Obviously, a person whose duties are limited to providing intake services would require a different set of KSAs as compared to an intervention specialist who conducts youth firesetting screenings or provides technical level interventions.

D. The program leader (in cooperation with the interagency task force) must understand the duties, JPRs and expected KSAs of each staff member.

E. The program manager must also remain abreast of each staff member's level of training, experience and current capabilities so that continuing education opportunities and practical skill development can be orchestrated.

F. Examples of training topics include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring that **all** staff has mastery understanding of program operating procedures.

2. Staff responsible for interacting with families must understand how firesetting is identified and the intake process is performed. This includes use of intake forms.

3. Those who work with firesetters and their families should receive training in interpersonal skills and rapport-building.

4. Staff members who will conduct screenings must become proficient in interviewing/conversing with people without constantly reading from the screening instrument. This skill requires practice and mentoring from those experienced in the process.

5.   Staff members who provide specific types of intervention services should be certified to at least the minimum standard pertinent to their specific JPR.

6.   The type of program staff and their levels of certification are often commensurate to the resources available to the program.

XVI. STAFF RECRUITMENT

A.   A YFPI program is only as good as its staff makes it. While having an adequate amount of staff members is essential, having the right staff is equally important.

B.   Working with youth firesetters and their families can be a challenging but very rewarding task.

C.   Due to the sensitive (and legal) nature of working with youth firesetting cases, a program manager must invest considerable thought into who would make a good YFPI staff member.

D.   Desirable traits may include but are not limited to:

1.   Superlative moral and ethical character.

2.   Ability to communicate well with children, youth and adults.

3.   Nonjudgmental character and the ability to embrace diversity of cultures.

4.   Good emotional intelligence.

      a.   Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, manage and use one's emotions to communicate effectively and have a positive impact on the relationships in life.

      b.   This definition can be simplified to mean the ability to meet, understand and communicate with people at their personal level and place in life.

5.   Ability to maintain confidentiality.

E.   As discussed earlier, a YFPI program should be a well-trained elite unit with a staff that possesses exemplary KSAs to effectively address/resolve youth firesetting situations.

F.   The wise program manager (and interagency task force) will develop a dynamic recruiting strategy that includes a comprehensive screening process to ensure that quality staffing levels are maintained.

XVII. BUDGET

A.   Once an interagency task force has been created, the program manager must lead the process of estimating the start-up costs of providing services.

B.   When the program is online, he or she must review the ongoing expenses to maintain (and potentially expand) program services.

C.   To accomplish these tasks, several items must be considered:

1.   Financial needs will be greatest during the program start-up.

2.   Training costs will be ongoing.

3.   There may need to be funding for overtime or the ability to backfill staff positions when YFPI staff need to perform specific tasks related to the program, not just for the fire department but also for other agencies that are involved in the program.

4.   Program costs, such as personnel, need to be considered.

D.   Personnel costs may include:

1.   Wages and associated benefits (i.e., health insurance, retirement contributions, payroll taxes, etc.).

2.   Firefighters, mental health professionals and clerical staff.

3.   It is important for all task force agencies to track percentages of their staff's time spent on YFPI program activities. This data will be helpful when time allocation needs to be justified to management or additional program funding must be sought.

E.   Program operational costs include the items necessary to sustain the day-to-day operations of the program. Some examples include:

1.   Office supplies.

2.   Copying costs.

3.   Computer expenses.

4.   Fuel costs.

5.   Program materials such as DVDs, brochures, educational materials, etc.

F.   An accurate estimate of the cost of running a YFPI program is critical to convincing decision-makers of the value of the program to the community.

   1.   A line-item budget, specifying the program costs and revenues anticipated, must be developed.

   2.   A budget is a planning tool that program managers can use to help evaluate the YFPI program's impact and level of efficiency.

   3.   The presence of a budget is important when seeking outside funding sources.

G.   The YFPI program manager must also understand the jurisdiction's budget cycle.

H.   Budget cycles are the time allotted to expend the resources dedicated to a specific budget.

   1.   Budgets normally follow either a calendar or fiscal year cycle.

      a.   A calendar year budget cycle follows the calendar year (e.g., the budget year 2015 starts Jan. 1, 2015).

      b.   A fiscal year cycle starts on a fixed date in the preceding year. fiscal year cycles typically start on July 1 preceding the calendar year through the following June (e.g., fiscal year 2015 begins July 1, 2014). Regardless, local governments generally follow the same process.

   2.   Budget criteria: Approximately six months prior to the beginning of the budget year, government departments receive guidance from the budgeting authority on constructing the following year's budget submission. Priorities and constraints are communicated at this time.

   3.   Department (or program) requests: Individual departments prepare their budget requests according to the guidance received and submit them to the budgeting authority.

XVIII. FUNDING SOURCES

A.   Once the youth firesetting program budget is estimated, the next task is to seek funding for the program. The operation of an intervention program depends on many factors including the availability of resources.

Sources of revenue/services may include:

1.   The community's municipal budget.

2.   Grants.

3.   Donations.

4.   Private foundations.

5.   Local businesses.

6.   Community or service organizations.

7.   Community development/improvement fund.

8.   A per student fee for intervention services.

9.   Fundraising.

B.   Because the problem of youth firesetting and arson affects the entire community, private companies, community organizations and service groups are often willing to support juvenile firesetting prevention and intervention programs.

C.   The support may be through a financial contribution or it may come in the form of donations or in-kind contributions. Some examples include:

1.   Companies who donate their program planning advice, management expertise, public relations assistance and fundraising services.

2.   Donations and in-kind contributions can take the form of office supplies and materials, computer equipment, and printing or mailing costs.

3   Community organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and service groups such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Shriners all have become involved in YFPI programs.

4.   Private companies to look to for support include the insurance industry.

D.   It is important to inform supporters that reducing juvenile involvement in firesetting reduces property loss and saves lives. Supporters are then more likely to lend their assistance in making their community a safer place in which to live, work and play (point out "what's in it for them").

E.   Another option to fund the program is to charge a per student fee to help offset intervention and educational services. If the youth firesetter has court involvement, the court can order a portion of restitution be paid to cover the YFPI program fee.

F.   Other options to cover the youth firesetting course fee include having the student obtain a job after school or during the summer months, providing community service in lieu of an actual cash payment.

G.   Local departments of social services or children/ family services may sometimes have funding dedicated to services for at-risk youth/families.

H.   It is recommended that YFPI programs consider a strategy that combines both public and private resources.

I.   A combination of private and public funding sources allows for a number of different organizations to lend a helping hand toward building and maintaining a YFPI program for the community.

XIX. DATA MANAGEMENT

A.   A YFPI program must document its day-to-day operations.

B.   Program policies and procedures should describe this documentation process, and all those working with the intervention program should be familiar with these procedures.

C.   Accurate documentation of the intervention program is a valuable practice for several reasons:

   1.   The data can be used to sustain or increase the program's budget.

   2.   The information can be used to categorize the individuals receiving services from the program for targeting efforts.

   3.   It can also be used to identify future audiences for primary fire and life safety education programs within the community.

   4.   Information from the data management system can help:

       a.   Monitor caseloads.

      b.   Track cases.

      c.   Determine final dispositions.

      d.   Provide valuable information about the successes of the program for evaluation purposes.

D.   It is the responsibility of each agency involved in the program to provide information about its involvement with the youth participating in the program.

E.   The data collection process should not be burdensome. Simple reports can be developed for case tracking and disposition.

F.   At intake, each case should be assigned an identifying case number. This will allow each individual file to be tracked through the system, similar to a fire department's incident response report number. This will also allow for easy accounting of the number of cases presented during a specific time period.

G.   Using case numbers also aids in maintaining the confidentiality of those involved in the program. A confidential master file will need to be maintained that cross-references the case number with the name of the firesetter and his or her family.

H.   Data management should include two categories of information.

      1.   Demographic information is data that reports the general circumstances of an event and information about the participants. Demographic data cannot be connected back to one individual.

              Demographic data that is pertinent to the YFPI program includes:

              a.   Source of referral.

              b.   Age, sex, race, family status of the firesetter.

              c.   Name of school attended by the firesetter and grade level.

              d.   Details of the firesetting incident.

              e.   Prior firesetting incidents.

              f.   Initial assessment after screening (level of risk).

      2.   Case management information is data that is specific to an individual firesetter and his or her family. This might include:

              a.   Names and case numbers.

b.   Addresses.

c.   Specific incident numbers.

d.   Any other information that would identify the firesetter or the family.

I.   This information is certainly critical in tracking the individual case through the program. However, collection and maintenance of this information must be done carefully as it has the potential to breach confidentiality requirements if shared outside of the program.

J.   An information management system should be able to provide answers regarding the following questions:

1.   How many cases have been handled this year relative to last year?

2.   What are the individual and family characteristics of the juveniles who were assessed?

3.   What are the characteristics of the fires that were set by the juveniles involved in the program?

4.   Which referral agencies are used the most?

5.   How long, on average, are juveniles and families in treatment?

K.   There may be additional information that is needed by an individual jurisdiction. Just as with the screening tools and other forms, the management information system can be tailored to meet the needs of the local jurisdiction.

L.   With these differences in mind, it becomes easier to understand and distinguish between the two sets of information so they can be used appropriately. It also clarifies the information-sharing boundaries needed for each program to operate appropriately.

M.   The local firesetting intervention task force should be in agreement about the necessary data to be collected, and the legal AHJ over the program should be consulted.

XX.   COMMUNITY OUTREACH/MARKETING THE PROGRAM

A.   The success of any YFPI program is measured by the support the program has from its community.

B.   If community members do not know a program exists, the extent of the firesetting problem, or the importance of youth firesetting intervention, the program will not be successful.

C.   Community outreach involves advertising the program and the services that it provides.

D.   The purpose of the community outreach program is two-fold.

   1.   One purpose is to educate the community on the extent of the firesetting problem.

      a.   Many individuals are unaware that there is a problem.

      b.   There may be myths and misunderstandings about what can happen to a child when parents/caregivers seek assistance.

      c.   Many individuals may not understand what interventions are needed to effectively address and stop the firesetting behavior.

   2.   The second purpose is to inform the community that a program exists to assist with the firesetting issue. The youth firesetting task force has a responsibility to the community to inform them that an intervention program is available to assist youth firesetters.

   3.   At minimum, YFPI programs should have a simple brochure to describe the program and provide contact information for parents/caregivers and other community members.

   4.   The material should be simple, and it should briefly highlight the service of the program and how individuals can avail themselves of this service.

   5.   These brochures can be distributed to daycare centers, preschools, pediatricians, social services, and all community organizations and agencies that work with children.

E.   Posters can be designed and placed in strategic locations in the community.

   1.   Posters can be developed as a means of advertising the program and even as a means for encouraging fire safe behaviors.

   2.   Posters can be placed in schools, municipal buildings, government offices, retail establishments and fire stations.

F.   Other forms of marketing include community presentations, letters of introduction, and partnerships with local businesses and community organizations.

G.   An excellent way to let the community know about the program, its availability and successes is to partner with the local media. Some examples of media outlets include:

    1.   Broadcast TV stations.

    2.   Newspapers.

    3.   Community access TV.

    4.   Cable TV.

    5.   Radio stations.

H.   The task force cannot wait for the news media to come to it.

    1.   The group must be proactive and aggressive in seeking out those media representatives to assist with advertising the intervention program.

    2.   Visits to the radio and television stations, telephone calls to reporters, editors and producers are ways to get the attention of the media.

    3.   The task force will have to sell the story, and it is imperative that the task force develop a fact sheet or clear, consistent messages about the program.

I.   The department/agency's website is another option for marketing a youth firesetting program. In addition, social networking mediums can be used as a low-cost means of informing constituents about the program.

XXI. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

A.   Legal issues must be considered when designing a multidisciplinary approach to youth firesetting intervention.

B.   The involvement of the local jurisdiction's legal counsel and a representative from the juvenile justice system is of the utmost importance in making sure that the policies and protocols of the program do not violate any laws or ordinances relating to juvenile rights.

C.   Some of the issues that should be addressed include:

    1.   Liability.

    2.   Confidentiality issues, ranging from names to security of documentation.

3. Mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect.

4. Juvenile justice referrals.

5. Medical information security (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protocols).

6. Caregiver rights.

7. State child protective laws.

8. Reading of juvenile Miranda rights (or when to call for law enforcement) — especially if a voluntary case turns suspicious or additional fires are set.

9. Use of consent forms.

D. Confidentiality of information.

1. Only authorized program staff should have access to YFPI program files.

2. If a person or agency outside the program requests the records, specific procedures must be followed before they are released.

3. If a court of law subpoenas files, then the program must comply by turning over the records.

4. Because these are records of minors, disclosing information from their records should be discussed with their parents/ caregivers.

5. Because laws regarding the sharing of juvenile files vary from state to state, it is important for the staff of each YFPI program to consult with the local district attorney.

6. Be careful when discussing firesetters and their families with anyone. (An exception could be made when abuse is suspected.)

XXII. FORMALIZING PROGRAM OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. Fire departments and agencies should have in place some kind of SOPs and SOGs that direct how the organization functions.

1. SOPs are a series of specific procedures that outline exactly how a job is to be performed. SOGs are similar, but they generally are more flexible in nature.

2.   A YFPI program should establish operating procedures that clearly state how the program is to function. The procedures should include directives that clarify personnel functions and to what standard these functions are to be performed.

B.   The purpose of SOPs.

1.   The development and use of SOPs is to provide team members with the information to perform a job properly.

2.   SOPs clarify the roles and responsibilities of team members.

3.   SOPs detail the regularly recurring work processes conducted within an organization.

4.   SOPs document the way activities are to be performed to facilitate consistency.

5.   SOPs should be specific to the YFPI program to maintain quality and to comply with organizational and governmental requirements.

C.   The benefits of SOPs.

1.   Development and use of SOPs minimizes variation of program services.

2.   Use of SOPs promotes quality through consistent implementation of program services, especially if there are temporary or permanent personnel changes.

3.   SOPs can be used as part of personnel training since they should provide detailed work instructions.

4.   SOPs minimize the opportunity for miscommunication and can address safety concerns.

D.   Writing style of SOPs.

1.   SOPs should be written in a concise, step-by-step, easy-to-read format.

2.   Information should be unambiguous and not overly complicated.

3.   The active voice and present verb tense should be used.

4.   The term "you" should not be used, but it should be implied.

5.   The document should not be wordy, redundant or overly lengthy.

6.   Keep it simple and short.

7.   Information should be conveyed clearly and explicitly to remove any doubts as to what is required.

8.   A flow chart to illustrate the process is helpful.

E.   SOP preparation.

1.   SOPs for a YFPI program should be written by individuals knowledgeable with the program's intended activities and the program's internal structure.

2.   A team approach can be followed, especially for multitasked processes where the experiences of a number of individuals are critical.

3.   SOPs should be written with sufficient detail so that someone with limited experience or knowledge of the procedure can successfully reproduce the procedure when unsupervised.

F.   SOP review and approval.

1.   SOPs should be reviewed or validated by one or more individuals with appropriate training and experience with the process.

2.   It is especially helpful if draft SOPs are actually tested by individuals other than the original writer before the SOP is finalized.

3.   The finalized SOP should be approved as described by the YFPI program.

4.   Signature approval indicates that an SOP has been both reviewed and approved by management.

G.   Frequency of revisions and reviews.

1.   To be useful, SOPs need to remain current.

2.   Whenever procedures are changed, SOPs should be updated and re-approved. The review date should be added to each SOP that has been reviewed.

3.   SOPs should be systematically reviewed on a periodic basis (e.g., every one to two years) to ensure that policies and procedures remain current and appropriate.

4.   If an SOP describes a process that is no longer followed, it should be withdrawn from the current file and archived.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Guidance for Preparing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) EPA QA/G-6. EPA/600/B-07/001, April 2007. Retrieved Jan. 3, 2011, from http://www.epa.gov/quality/ qs-docs/g6-final.pdf.

XXIII. YFPI PROGRAM OPERATIONS HANDBOOK

A.   A YFPI program operations handbook provides the user with examples of each document used by the program.

B.   The purpose of an operations handbook is to:

  1.   Develop written documentation of the program policies and procedures.

  2.   Use as the primary training resource for new personnel as they join the program.

  3.   Ensure that all documents used by the program are available for review.

  4.   Provide an informal step-by-step guide of how to deliver program services.

C.   While an operations handbook may vary from program to program, depending on available resources and the number of referrals into the program, there are some items that are necessary for inclusion in this document. These include:

  1.   Identification procedures.

  2.   Intake procedures and forms.

  3.   Screening procedures and forms.

  4.   Intervention strategies defined.

  5.   Procedures for making referrals.

  6.   Follow-up/Evaluation of the firesetter.

  7.   Closeout of the case.

D.   The operations handbook should be distributed to all agencies and people who will play a role with the YFPI program.

XXIV. RESOURCES DIRECTORY

A. A YFPI program resources directory contains the names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of agencies that work with youth firesetters and their families.

B. The resource directory is most useful to the YFPI program when referring youth and their families for services outside the program.

C. The directory can include information about local, county and statewide agencies. It can also provide referral information, cost information, insurance coverage and the like.

D. Resource information can be obtained by communicating with local or countywide fire departments, mental health agencies, and social services.

E. This resources directory is most useful when referring youth and their families for services that the program does not provide.

XXV. SUMMARY

UNIT 3:
PROGRAM EVALUATION

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

The students will be able to:

3.1   Demonstrate how to evaluate a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program.

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

3.1   Explain why evaluation is an integral component of a YFPI program.

3.2   Define the three stages of program development.

3.3   Define the four stages of program evaluation.

3.4   Describe how to use the stages of program evaluation to measure the development, implementation and operation of their YFPI program.

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I.   PURPOSE OF EVALUATING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A.   Evaluation of a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) program.

    1.   Determines whether the program or aspects of the program are:

        a.   Appropriate.

        b.   Adequate.

        c.   Effective.

        d.   Efficient.

    2.   Is our road map for:

        a.   Program planning.

        b.   Good management practice.

        c.   Informed decisions.

B.   Evaluation can provide information to support decision-making pertinent to the management of a YFPI program.

C.   Program evaluation can provide essential information for performance planning and assessment.

D.   A well thought-out and executed program evaluation can be used to:

    1.   Communicate program strategy and value.

    2.   Describe the impact of services on the community, especially target groups.

    3.   Promote services in the community.

    4.   Decide how to fund and allocate (or reallocate program resources) to best achieve program outcomes.

    5.   Eliminate activities that have proven ineffective and drop components that are not cost-effective.

    6.   Revise program goals, objectives and strategies.

7.   Revise objectives to make them more realistic.

8.   Target new or different audiences and allies.

9.   Modify, refine or redesign an activity or program.

10.   Identify whether to modify or make timely adjustments to the program design or implementation to improve the rate of program achievement relative to the resources committed.

11.   Decide how best to improve program operations (e.g., add new technology, increase efficiency of operations via streamlining, refining or redesigning).

12.   Decide whether to continue the program or specific program elements.

II.   SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING PROGRAM EVALUATION

A.   Define the evaluation based on the YFPI program's goals and objectives.

B.   Identify the types of information to be collected.

C.   Choose suitable methods for collecting the information.

D.   Design instruments to collect information.

E.   Collect and analyze information.

F.   Analyze and interpret findings of the evaluation.

G.   Communicate results.

H.   Implement changes.

III.   CHALLENGES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION

A.   A long-standing challenge to our industry has been a tendency to develop and operate prevention programs without consideration of how they will be evaluated.

B.   YFPI programs are not immune from this challenge.

C.   Failure to properly evaluate a YFPI program can lead to misdirected resources and a lack of program effectiveness.

D. Practical problems in conducting evaluations of YFPI and community risk-reduction programs in general:

    1. Limited amounts of data (small numbers).

    2. Rare occurrences of specific events.

    3. Inaccurate collection or processing of data.

    4. Limited time frame to collect data.

    5. Community mobility (people move a lot).

    6. Limited resources (time/money).

    7. Lack of confidence or trained people.
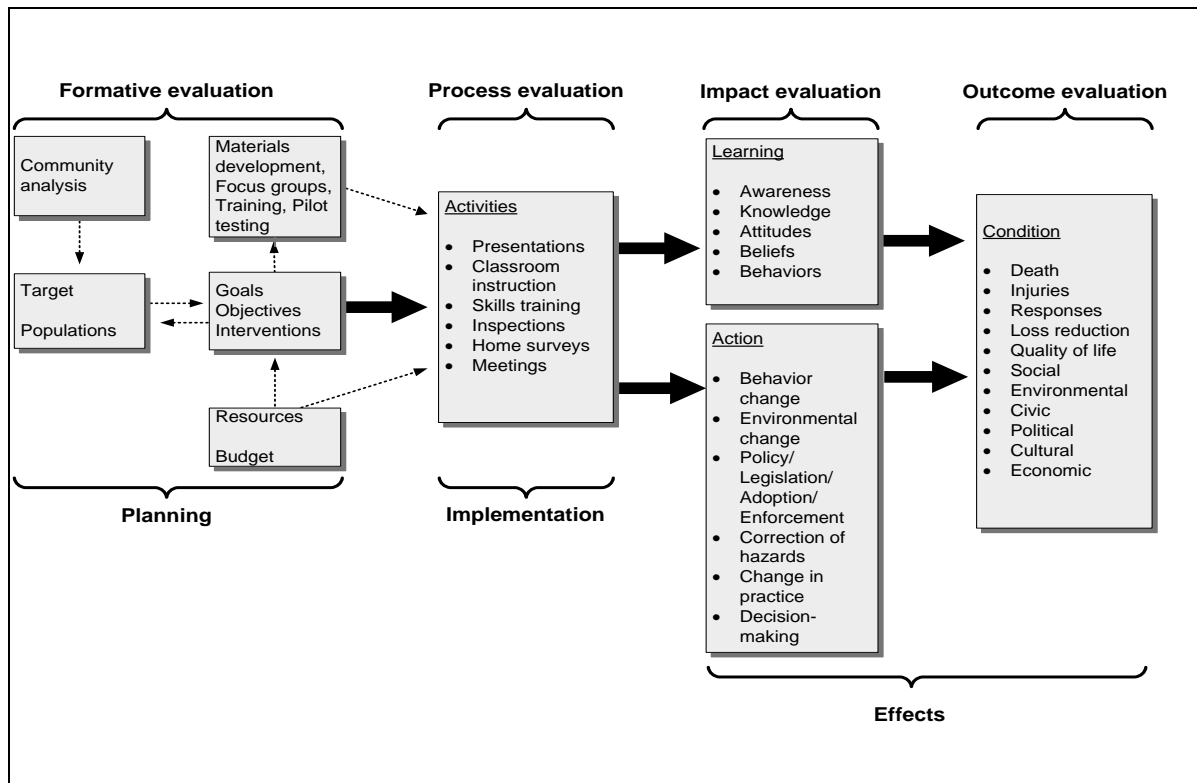
IV. LIFECYCLE OF A PREVENTION PROGRAM

A. Prevention programs (including YFPI programs) mature and change over time. A program's stage of development reflects its maturity.

B. There are three stages of program development:

    1. Planning.

        a. Program activities are untested at this stage.

        b. The goal of evaluation at this stage is to create and refine plans.

    2. Implementation.

        a. Program activities are being field-tested and modified.

        b. The goal of evaluation at this stage is to:

            - Characterize real-world, as opposed to ideal, program activities.

            - To improve operations, perhaps by revising plans.

    3. Effects.

        a. Enough time has passed for the program's effects to emerge.

      b.   The goal of evaluation is to identify and account for both intended and unintended effects of a program.

V. FOUR STAGES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

There are four stages of program evaluation. Each has its own purpose and value in assessing a program.

A.   Formative stage — conducted during the planning and implementation stages of a program **or** when an existing program is having difficulties.

B.   Process stage — performed once the program has been implemented and showing signs of activity/outreach into the community.

C.   Impact stage — conducted during the intermediate stages of a program to measure if the program is helping to increase knowledge levels, change behaviors or modify living environments/lifestyles.

D.   Outcome stage — done over the long term to measure if a program has reduced incidents, saved lives/property, or improved the quality of life in a community.

VI. STAGES OF EVALUATION

A. Stage 1: Formative evaluation.

1. Used:

   a. During the development of a new program.

   b. When an existing program is being modified or has problems with no obvious solutions.

   c. When a program is used in a new setting with a new population.

   d. When a program is targeting a new problem or behavior.

2. Main purpose is to strengthen or improve the development/delivery of a program.

   Unfortunately, formative evaluation is a step often overlooked or underutilized by program developers.

3. With respect to a new program, formative evaluation allows programs to make revisions **before** the full effort begins, thereby maximizing the likelihood that the program will succeed.

4. The following are questions to answer during the formative evaluation stage for a new program.

   a. Address local needs: Does the program seek to impact a local risk issue that has been identified through objective analysis of accurate data?

   b. Appropriate stakeholders: Are people/groups who have a vested interest in the risk issue involved in the program planning process?

   c. Knowledge levels: What do stakeholders know about the risk being addressed by the program?

   d. Introduction: When is the best time to introduce the program or modification to the target population?

   e. Plans and strategies: Are the proposed plans/strategies realistic and likely to succeed? Are time frames for development and implementation present and realistic?

f.   Resources: Are adequate resources (time, people, money) available to develop, implement and sustain the program? Do resources support the goals and objectives of the program?

g.   Methods for implementing program: Are the proposed methods for implementing program plans, strategies and evaluations feasible, appropriate and likely to be effective?

h.   Ability to reach target populations with market research: How do people in the target population get information? What are the best mediums for communication? (Is it television, newspaper, radio, Internet, word of mouth or a combination of sources?)

i.   Program activities: Are the proposed activities suitable for the target population?

-      That is, are they current, meaningful, barrier-free, culturally sensitive and related to the desired outcome? For example, is the literacy level appropriate?

j.   Logistics: Are program scheduling and locations appropriate?

-      For example, would scheduling program hours during the normal workday make it difficult for some people in the target population to use the program?

k.   Acceptance by program personnel: Is the program consistent with the staff's values? Are all staff members comfortable with the roles they have been assigned?

-      For example, are they willing to learn what to do if a parent shows up at a firehouse stating that their child is experimenting with fire in the home? Has the staff been adequately trained to perform their prospective duties?

l.   Barriers to success: Are there beliefs among the target population that work against the program?

-      For example, do some people believe that it is a natural phase of growth for children to experiment with fire?

5.   Who you ask to participate in formative evaluation depends on the evaluation's purpose.

a.   For example, if you are pilot testing materials for a new program, select people or households at random from the target population who share characteristics of the proposed target populations.

        b.   If you want to know the level of consumer satisfaction with your program, select evaluation participants from people or households who have already been served by your program.

        c.   If you want to know why fewer people than expected are taking advantage of your program, select evaluation participants from among people or households in the target population who did not respond to your messages.

6.   How to use results of formative evaluation.

        a.   Well-designed formative evaluation shows which aspects of your program are likely to succeed and which need improvement.

        b.   It should also show how problem areas can be improved.

        c.   It can be used to modify the program's plans, materials, strategies and activities to reflect the information gathered during formative evaluation.

7.   Formative evaluation is a dynamic ongoing process.

        a.   Even after the prevention program has begun, formative evaluation should continue.

        b.   The evaluator must create mechanisms (e.g., customer satisfaction forms to be completed by program participants) that continually provide feedback to program management from participants, staff, supervisors and anyone else involved in the program.

B.   Stage 2: Process evaluation.

1.   Should answer the following question: Is the program being delivered as intended?

        a.   This is a very important question to answer because even the best-designed program may not produce intended results if it is not delivered properly.

        b.   The methods for tracking process evaluation (forms, surveys, databases, etc.) should be designed during the formative stage of a program's development.

2.   Often referred to as "program monitoring." This begins as soon as the program is put into action and continues throughout the life of the program.

3.   Process evaluation examines how well a program is being delivered.

      a.   Identifies when and where programs occur.

      b.   Identifies who delivered services and how well they did.

      c.   Examines how well the program is reaching its intended target populations.

4.   Keeping track of the following information is considered process evaluation.

      a.   Program activity level, such as:

          -      Training sessions for staff.

          -      Meetings to organize program outreach.

          -      Materials purchased for program.

          -      Number of programs presented.

          -      Locations of presentations.

          -      Number of people who attended presentations.

          -      Number of materials distributed.

          -      Number of home surveys conducted.

      b.   Program/Staff performance levels, such as:

          -      Participant satisfaction with program.

          -      Performance of staff who deliver programs.

5.   Process evaluation is useful because it identifies early on any problems that are occurring in reaching the target population.

      a.   Allows programs to evaluate how well their plans, procedures, activities and materials are working and to make adjustments before logistical or administrative weaknesses become entrenched.

      b.   Allows one to understand why a program may or may not have influenced short- or long-term changes.

c.   For example, poor attendance may explain why a well-designed educational activity did not influence a target group's knowledge.

d.   If process evaluation identifies unexpected problems with a program, especially if it shows you are not reaching as many people in the target population as you expected to, conduct additional formative evaluation to figure out why.

6.   Done well, the process stage of evaluation sets up a pattern for ascending levels of program success.

Much of the information gathered during the process stage will be used as a foundation for impact and outcome evaluation when you will be calculating the effect your program has had on the target population.

7.   Some components of process evaluation are similar to those performed in a program's formative stage of development.

8.   The main point to remember is to start evaluating the minute you begin thinking about a program and keep doing it throughout its lifespan.

C.   Stage 3: Impact evaluation.

1.   Impact evaluation reveals the degree to which a program is meeting its intermediate goals. It measures two important levels of performance: learning and action.

a.   Learning.

Did the program influence any of the following among the target population?

-      Awareness.

-      Knowledge levels.

-      Attitudes and/or beliefs.

-      Skill levels.

-      Action.

b.   Did the program change any of the following?

-      Target population behavior or lifestyle change.

- Change within a targeted physical environment.

- Public policy, legislation, adoption or enforcement.

- Hazard reduction.

- Change in practice.

- Decision-making process.

2. It is often the least used, but the most important stage of evaluation.

   A major contributing factor to its lack of use is that impact evaluation requires time, skill, planning and effort.

3. Requires that baseline measurements are taken before the program is delivered and after it has been completed.

4. Compares conditions that existed before a program was delivered to those present after it was completed.

5. Impact evaluation mechanisms should be designed during the development phases of a program.
   Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are almost always measured by some type of assessment instrument.

   a. The instrument could be a test, survey or questionnaire.

   b. Evaluators might also observe group discussions to watch and listen for signs of change among participants' knowledge, attitudes or beliefs.

   c. Physical, environmental and lifestyle changes are usually assessed by direct observation.

      - For example, an observer might check to see that smoke alarms are installed appropriately or that adults are keeping ignition tools from being accessed by children.

6. Conducting impact evaluation is important because it allows management to modify materials or move resources from a nonproductive to a productive area of program.

7. If the results of impact evaluation are positive, they can be used to justify continuing a program.

8.   If the results are negative, they can help justify revising or discontinuing a program.

9.   In addition to providing tangible evidence to evaluators, impact data can be used to show stakeholders and potential funders that a program is working.

10.   In the case of a program experiencing challenges, impact evaluation can be used to help justify support for adjustments.
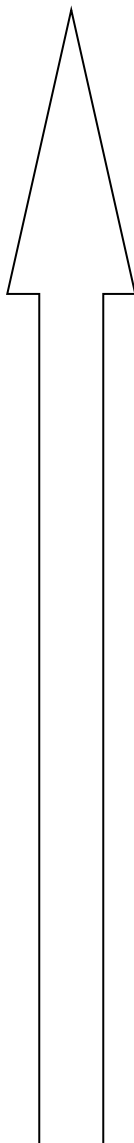
D.   Stage 4: Outcome evaluation.

1.   Demonstrates the degree to which the program has met its ultimate goals.

2.   Measures change over an extended period of time within the community.

3.   Outcome evaluation seeks to provide:

    a.   Statistical proof that the risk-reduction program is reducing risk in the specified areas. Program success is proven by a reduction of deaths, injuries, property and medical costs in the target area.

    b.   Valid anecdotal proof (such as personal testimonials) that verify outcomes. Anecdotal proof is used frequently to measure outcome of social-oriented risk-reduction initiatives.

    c.   In some circumstances, outcome can be demonstrated by improvement in the target population's health and quality of life.

    d.   Cultural change can be a measurement of outcome because it often leads to sustained levels of behavioral change.

4.   Just like impact evaluation, measuring outcome requires baseline data about conditions that exist prior to the start of a program, initiative or strategy.

    a.   It is difficult at best and often impossible to prove outcome unless baseline data is in place.

    b.   This is especially true when attempting to measure changes in morbidity, mortality, and economic and social conditions.

5.   When seeking to perform outcome evaluation on a specific program, the following strategy is recommended:

a.   Outcome evaluation should be used for ongoing programs (e.g., YFPI program) at appropriate intervals throughout the program's offerings.

b.   For ongoing programs (e.g., a series of fire safety classes given each year in elementary schools), conduct outcome evaluation as soon as enough people or households have participated in the program to make outcome evaluation results meaningful.

c.   Depending on the extent of your youth firesetting problem (and the number of programs you deliver), you could conduct outcome evaluation, for example, every year, every three years or every five years to find out how well the program's effects are sustained over time.

6.   Preparation for outcome evaluation begins when the program is being designed.

The type of data (and their sources) must be considered carefully. To be considered reliable, data must be collected from valid sources in a systematic, unbiased manner.

7.   In general, measuring changes in morbidity (injuries) and mortality (deaths) is not so easy.

a.   For example, you can measure the change in helmet-wearing behavior of children who participated in a safety training class soon after the class is over.

b.   Measuring the reduction in morbidity and mortality as a result of those same children's change in behavior is more difficult, and results take much longer to appear.

c.   Documenting changes in morbidity and mortality that are a direct result of a program to reduce most unintentional injuries requires a vastly larger study population than does documenting changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

d.   In addition to a large study population, documenting changes in morbidity and mortality requires a long-term study, which can be time-consuming.

8.   You can use positive results of outcome evaluation as even stronger evidence than the results of impact evaluation to justify continued funding for your program.

Evaluation Measures

Feature Measure	Type of Evaluation	Examples of Evaluation Measures	Instruments and Methods to Measure Change
1. End result	Outcome	Number of deaths, injuries, dollar loss, number of calls	Injury/Loss statistics
		Saves attributed to program	Anecdotes
2. Public policy	Impact	Passage of legislation ordinances and codes	Legislation
3. Behavior	Impact	Percent of parents who have isolated fire tools in their home	Observational survey
		Percent of adolescents who can state the penalties of repeat firesetting	Questionnaire
		Children who can do stop, drop and roll	Skill testing
4. Environment	Impact	Percent of homes with updated smoke alarm protection	Home visit
5. Knowledge	Impact	Percent of public that knows how to maintain smoke alarms	Pretest/Post-test self-report survey
6. Extent of program	Process	Percent of public receiving prevention materials	Calculating number of people attending presentations
7. Appeal and usage	Formative	Percentage of teachers who think materials meet state objectives and use them	Pilot testing of forms, questionnaire, personal interviews, focus groups
8. Institutional change	Formative	Introduction of safety curriculum	Letter of agreement, adoption of curriculum
		Funding for programs	Budget
		Forming/Joining task force	Minutes of meeting

VII.   WHAT IS AN EVALUATION PLAN?

A.   The evaluation **process** should begin when the idea for creating a program is conceived. Evaluation should continue throughout the lifespan of the program.

B.   An evaluation **plan** describes in precise, **measurable** terms how a prevention program is to be developed, implemented, operated and monitored.

It also describes the intended levels of outreach, impact and outcome that the program seeks to achieve.

C.   The foundation of an evaluation plan is its goals and objectives.

1.   Goals.

a.   Without clear goals and well developed objectives, it is virtually impossible to assess and evaluate where we are making a difference in community risk reduction.

b.   A goal is a statement that overall explains what the program seeks to accomplish. It sets the fundamental, long-range direction of the program.

c.   Typically, goals are broad, general statements. A goal summarizes expected results and outcomes rather than program methods and activities.

2.   Objectives.

a.   Without objectives, the fundamental components of the program cannot be developed (i.e., specific interventions).

b.   An objective is a concise statement of the desired product of the risk-reduction initiative.

c.   Provide realistic steps to attain goal.

d.   Good objectives are challenging but achievable.

e.   Must relate to the mission of the organization and the goals of the governing authority.

f.   Focus on what's to be done and how to do it.

g.   Objectives are tied to what we want to measure and evaluate. What do we want to know about our program?

D. SMART objectives refer to an acronym designed around the five leading indicators of a solid program.

   1. Specific: What precisely is going to be done, and with or for whom?

      a. The program states a specific outcome or a precise objective to be accomplished in concrete terms.

      b. The outcome is clearly defined in numbers, percentages, frequency, etc. The objective is defined clearly.

      c. An action is described. The verb is important, especially in process objectives.

      d. Verbs such as "provide", "train", "publish", "purchase" or "schedule" indicate clearly what will be done. Verbs like "partner", "support", "facilitate" and "enhance" are vague.

      e. Action may be described by something completed such as a code adopted or by the amount of injuries or fires reduced (e.g., 50 percent reduction in occurrence).

   2. Measurable: Is it quantifiable, and can it be measured?

      a. The objective can be measured and the measurement source is identified.

      b. Collection of the data is feasible for your program or partners.

      c. Baseline data is basic information that must be identified before a program begins so that impact and outcome can be measured.

      d. A baseline measurement is required to document change (e.g., to measure percentage increase or decrease).

      e. If the baseline is unknown, indicate in the objective as "baseline to be determined" with the source and year.

      f. All activities should be measurable at some level.

   3. Achievable: Can we get it done in the proposed time frame/in this political climate/for this amount of money/with resources and support available?

      a. The objective or expectation of what will be accomplished must be realistic given the time period, resources allocated, and political and economic conditions.

        b.   The objective should not only be achievable but challenging as well.

4.   Relevant: Will the objective have an effect on the desired goal or strategy?

        a.   Does it address the scope of the problem and propose reasonable programmatic steps?

        b.   The outcome or results of the program directly support the mission of the agency's long-range plan or goal.

5.   Timeframed: When will the objective be achieved?

        a.   A specified and reasonable time frame should be incorporated into the objective.

        b.   Take into consideration the environment where the change is expected, the scope of the change, and how it fits into the work plan.

IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION PLAN

Cleveland Park Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program

Vision: Cleveland Park will be a community that prevents and intervenes in youth firesetting.

Problem Statement: The problem is the Cleveland Park Fire/Rescue Service responds to a disproportionately higher rate of firesetting incidents involving youth between the ages of 12-17 as compared to communities of similar size and demographics.

Goal: To decrease youth firesetting incidents involving youth (ages 12-17) in Cleveland Park.

Outcome Objectives

As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By December 2016, there will be a 50 percent reduction in the number of firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17. Evaluation methods: fire and police reports.

By December 2016, there will be a 40 percent reduction in fire loss attributed to firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17. Evaluation methods: fire reports.

Impact Objectives

As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By October 2013, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be adopted among agencies handling youth involved in firesetting. Evaluation method: adoption of MOUs.

By January 2015, the city council will have adopted an ordinance prohibiting the sale of novelty lighters in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: passage of ordinance.

By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least three ways that an arson arrest can affect them and their families. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests.

By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can identify the age juveniles can be arrested in their state. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests.

By June 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least two of the state's arson laws. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests.

By December 2015, there will be a 25 percent increase in the number of parents/caregivers who attended the YFPI who can name three ways they can prevent acts of youth firesetting. Evaluation methods: pretests and post-tests.

By December 2015, there will be a 95 percent increase in the number of working smoke alarms located in the homes of families that have attended the YFPI program. Evaluation methods: observational surveys and self-report surveys.

Process Objectives

By October 2013, the program manager will have distributed three news releases and three articles to local media to raise awareness about youth involved in firesetting. Evaluation methods: counting number of outlets using news releases and articles and estimating percent of public receiving news releases and articles.

By December 2013, the program manager will begin offering the educational component of the youth firesetting intervention program to youth and their families who have been referred to the program as often as needed to meet demand. Evaluation method: program presentation records.

By October 2013, each member of the task force will have made at least three presentations to a community group about the problem (and solutions to) youth firesetting in the community. Evaluation method: program presentation records.

By December 2014, the program manager will have evaluated the performance of the school-based educational program and all instructors who present it. Evaluation method: performance evaluation checklist.

By June 2015, there will have been 200 school-based educational programs on state arson laws presented at secondary schools in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: program presentation records.

Formative Objectives

By March 2013, key staff from the Cleveland Park Fire Department will have identified and recruited primary stakeholders in the Cleveland Park District to join the YFPI task force. Evaluation method: commitment of stakeholders.

By May 2013, the task force will start program planning based on the escalation of youth-set fires identified through the community risk assessment of Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: records from meetings.

By July 2013, the task force will develop goals, interventions and objectives for the YFPI program. Evaluation method: development of program.

By August 2013, the program manager, with assistance from the task force, will design the educational component for youth and their families referred to the YFPI program. Evaluation method: development of educational component.

By September 2013, MOUs will be developed by the task force on how youth will be handled by various agencies. Evaluation method: development of MOUs.

By September 2013, the task force will have drafted standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the fire department (and partner agencies) on how youth who set fires are handled. Evaluation method: SOPs.

By December 2013, all partner agencies (including the fire department) will have trained key staff on how to make referrals to the YFPI program. Evaluation method: training records.

By March 2014, the program manager, with the help of the task force, will have developed a lesson plan on state arson laws for use in the secondary schools in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: development of lesson plan.

By May 2014, the program manager will have received permission from the school board of Cleveland Park to instruct teachers in secondary schools about the lesson plans pertaining to arson laws and how they pertain to youth ages 12-17 years. Evaluation method: letter of agreement and adoption of curriculum.

By July 2014, the program manager will have trained teachers in the pilot school to use the lesson plans about arson laws in the state. Evaluation method: record of training.

By August 2014, the task force will have drafted legislation restricting novelty lighters in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: drafting of legislation.

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VIII.   DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN

A.   Development of an evaluation plan is best handled as a group exercise among the YFPI program partners/leadership team.

B.   This strategy allows the team to be involved in planning, implementation and management of the program.

   1.   Allows opportunity to weigh different perspectives.

   2.   Consensus on what signals success.

   3.   Better chance of support for program.

   4.   Nothing for us without us.

C.   There are four types of objectives used in developing and evaluating a program plan: formative, process, impact and outcome. These objectives are tied to how the program will be evaluated.

IX.   TYPES OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

A.   Formative objectives.

   1.   Formative objectives are SMART objectives written during the planning stage of a program. These objectives help define how the program is to be developed, pilot-tested and implemented.

   2.   Formative objectives call for explanation of why the program is needed. Calling for a community risk analysis can be stated in a formative objective.

   3.   Formative objectives also can call for exploration of general knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of your target audience before the program is developed, while it is being tested, and throughout implementation.

   4.   Good formative objectives can guide a planning team to discover strengths and weaknesses of a program as it is developing and before huge resource investments are made.

   5.   Formative objectives help establish baselines for your efforts to be measured. They examine the early stages of the program's development concerning:

      a.   Community risks.

        b.   Target populations.

        c.   Stakeholders.

        d.   Existing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs.

        e.   Material development.

        f.   Developing goals and objectives.

        g.   Testing procedures.

        h.   Resources needed.

6. Formative objectives also call for the development of a program.

7. Examples of formative objectives:

        a.   By August 2013, the program manager, with assistance from the task force, will design the educational component for youth and their families who are referred to the YFPI program.

            -      Evaluation method: development of educational component.

        b.   By September 2013, the task force will have drafted SOPs for the fire department (and partner agencies) on how youth who set fires are handled.

            -      Evaluation method: SOPs.

B. Process objectives.

1. Process objectives describe anything having to do with program activities, procedures and materials.

2. The number of intended presentations, attendance and material distribution can be described in process objectives.

3. Process objectives can also describe the intended quality of the service being delivered.

4. They are written using action verbs to show accountability: "monitor", "coordinate", "plan", "write" or "publish" (rather than "know", "learn" and "feel").

5. Process objectives are normally developed after the interventions have been selected and decisions are made based on who is going to do what when.

6. Process objectives assign responsibility for activities to be completed by specific dates.

7. These objectives are an important component of an evaluation plan because they can indicate who will be responsible for doing what and include a deadline of when tasks are to be accomplished.

8. Examples of process objectives:

    a. By December 2013, the program manager will begin offering the educational component of the youth firesetting intervention program to youth and their families referred to the program as often as needed to meet demand.

        -   Evaluation method: program presentation records.

    b. By October 2013, each member of the task force will have made at least three presentations to a community group about the problem of (and solutions to) youth firesetting in the community.

        -   Evaluation method: program presentation records.

C. Impact objectives.

    1. Impact objectives are SMART objectives written to describe the following:

        a. Who will be affected by the program.

        b. What results are expected.

        c. How large a change is necessary to demonstrate success.

        d. How much time is required for the change to occur.

    2. Impact objectives are written to show desired changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, physical environment or public policy that will be created by the program in a relatively short term (one to five years).

    3. Baseline data is required so that current knowledge levels, attitudes, living conditions, use of safety equipment, etc. can be compared to those that exist after a program has been operating for a designated time period.

4.   Impact objectives answer the question: What do you want to know in the short-term about your program?

Don't forget — Baseline data must be obtained before impact and outcome can be measured.

5.   Examples of impact objectives:

a.   By June 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 25 percent increase in youth ages 12-17 who can name at least two of the state's arson laws.

-       Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pretests and post-tests.

b.   By December 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 25 percent increase in the number of parents/caregivers that attended the YFPI who can name three ways they can prevent acts of youth firesetting.

-       Evaluation methods: pretests and post-tests.

c.   By December 2015 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 95 percent increase in the number of working smoke alarms located in the homes of families that have attended the YFPI program.

-       Evaluation methods: observational surveys and self-report surveys.

D.   Outcome objectives.

1.   An outcome objective is a SMART objective written to show the intended long-term implications of your program. It describes expected outcomes for the community.

2.   Outcome objectives describe the intended effect of the program (usually to reduce the occurrence of a condition).

3.   Outcome objectives may be related to personal, social, economic, environmental or health conditions.

4.   Outcome objectives usually call for a long-term reduction in deaths, injuries, property loss and emergency responses. They should be tied to evaluation, support your goal, and state conditions you ultimately want to achieve.

     5.   Examples of outcome objectives.

          a.   By December 2016 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 50 percent reduction in the number of firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17.

             -      Evaluation methods: fire and police reports.

          b.   By December 2016 (as compared to baseline data), there will be a 40 percent reduction in fire loss attributed to firesetting incidents involving youth ages 12-17.

             -      Evaluation methods: fire reports.

X.   SUMMARY

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