**STRATEGIC PLAN RESPONSE 2014 INTERFACE-CENTRAL**

**How to increase shelter utilization:**

* Provide the best services, so we will be referred by families who have received our services.
* Use flyers, distribute to schools churches and community centers.
* Being more positive about doing screenings.
* Don’t let the let the problem of the youth’s behavior interfere with staff accepting participants.
* More follow-up with screenings.
* Have more consistent contact with schools.
* Do more outreach.

**How to improve Communication:**

Between supervisors and YCWs

* Ask instead of assuming; questions don’t hurt, it helps.
* Keep the flow of communication open.
* Supervisors should come to staff with issues concerning rumors instead of being hush-hush about it.
* Supervisors should establish an effective protocol for dispensing petty cash in a timely manner.
* Utilization of staff boxes in control room.
* Set appointment with supervisors to catchup with everything.
* Post information in the control room.
* Use PLB more.

Between counselors and YCWs

* Counselors should brief the YCW on what to look for with participants and give general information on participants.
* Counselors should document in the PLB when they are pulling a participant and notify the YCWs on duty.
* Counselors should keep YCW updated on participant’s status.
* Counselors should participate in shift exchange with the YCWs. It helps to make sure everyone is on the same page and in agreement.
* Have a more formal process for putting participants on or off sub system.

Between YCWs with each other

* Experienced YCW can help out newer YCW.
* Have patience with each other.
* Have respect for each other.
* Follow up with any problems from previous shifts
* Solve problems with each other.
* Improve the poor communication; there is no continuity, shift to shift.
* Don’t manipulate the FACE system to let participants have privileges.
* Come to work to work.
* Be able to take constructive criticism, and don’t become offended. Remember we are here for the participants.
* Don’t get MIA in the control room.
* There should be respect for the decisions a YCW makes related to the FACE system.
* Respect each other and don’t talk about other staff with participants.
* Be sure to share important information during shift exchange.

Between all staff and participants

* Have patience.
* Be open minded.
* Be receptive to constrictive criticism.
* Use social skills.
* Handle the problem and don’t pass it on or off.
* Be mindful of the type of children we are dealing with
* Step out if you need to.
* Remain professional
* Don’t talk to participants like they’re an equal to an adult.
* Don’t entertain foolishness with the participants about staff.
* Watch the way you treat participants, don’t use profanity or degrade them.

**Improvements for hiring and retention of qualified staff:**

Hiring

* Have current staff participate in the interview process, to ask questions.
* Have persons being considered for a position to shadow 2 shifts first.
* Potential hires should understand the job is not just an easy paycheck.

Retention

* Perks, such as raises $.
* Effective training
* Bonuses
* Incentives
* Consequences across the board for everyone when errors occur.

**How can programming become more effective:**

* Ensure follow-up occurs.
* Have effective trainings for staff.
* Build staff morale.
* Increase supervisor presence.
* Find better ways to de-stress staff.
* Have events to build rapport and camaraderie among staff.
* Be more supportive and accepting of staff ideas.
* Provide the best service possible.
* Build a stronger team.

**Interface Central Staff Feedback**

**As a program we should serve at least 12 CINS/FINS youth each day to meet our contract obligations. What happens to prevent the program from reaching our goal?**

* “The behaviors that are told to the staff sometimes make them say, ‘This child should not be in our program. The other factor is that it is voluntary and therefore kids don’t take it seriously. Parents tend to send kids here for punishment instead of really working on issues that are important.”
* “When there are not 12 youth in the facility, this would prevent the program from reaching its daily goal. In that case individually we could all do a better job at making the community aware of the program so that they may take advantage of this great resource.”
* “As already stated by Mr. Clark, location may be a factor. We deal with truancy and ungovernable attitudes but runaways as a whole don’t really show up in Gainesville. Lack of marketing/advertising. Possible short videos done about Interface by local schools or maybe UF posted on YouTube and our website.”
* *“All shelters should work collectively; one shelter should not be depended on to carry the load. One shelter in particular often denies services when the other shelter offers services to any and all.”*
* *“Not serious-minded. Not enough compassion. Not enough consequences/ enforced consequences.”*
* *“Participants generally don’t get a feel for joy while here. It’s a grind to many with no fun aspects. They do get a sense of relief and safety and structure. Staff is not supported well for having new ideas or spending money on activities and events. Innovation is a key word.”*
* *“Retaining Participants that are here because they don’t get along with other Participants or staff.*

*Poor reputation in the community where parents don’t feel this is a safe place to bring their children.*

*A need for more effective marketing of our services to the community: outreaches, fundraisers, media utilization.”*

* *“One of the main issues is when we get a few of our CINS/FINS kids, they begin fighting with different kids or just not working with the program. Because of this, the program will send the participant home before their stay is completed.”*
* *“Participants are afraid of bullying from others; they will contact their parents and leave to go home.”*
* *“There aren’t enough things for the kids to do. They do not have activities like other programs do such as going out to a college game or going on outings. It’s not just going the park and calling it an ‘outing’. These are kids and they have to have something to keep them busy on their downtime.”*
* *“I feel that not only are there many other organizations out there to help families, but I feel many do not know about CDS and/or what it has to offer kids and families.*

*Some schools are doing an ‘ok’ job getting our information to the parents, though it is usually when it’s already at a breaking point for them.*

*Church groups offer help, but do not have much to offer families when the situation goes beyond their ability to help.”*

* *“Increased escalated youth and an inability overall to be able to address the escalation.*

*Increased youth with mental health and systemic issues beyond staff’s ability to address.*

*Staff attitudes and feelings of defeat which create an unwillingness to want to keep youth.*

*Catty staff who pick at youth constantly and create glitches in the program’s flow.*

*Staff is not being welcoming during screening process especially when youth is visibly problematic.”*

* *“Environment should be more structured. Have consistency in work with staff and participants.*

*Enhance communication.*

*Provide more activities and outings that are educational and fun. Enhance learning for participants and staff.*

*Develop a system based on rewards only. Earn privileges.”*

* *“Not following up with screenings when house appears to be getting low, instead of waiting until numbers are dramatically low.”*
* *“The program honestly has a bad reputation for being a place for bad kids, then the kids know and continue to have this behavior. If somehow the shelter could lose this stigma, maybe more children will come. Plus, staff maybe are a little hard on them and may need to try to understand more why the children are having certain problems.”*
* *“Children having the issues that keep them from coming.*

*Parents knowing about the program but not wanting to enroll their child maybe because of a previous experience or other people’s experience.”*

* *“Numbers could be low during certain seasons of the year. Also, not many people know about the program, or it may be that Interface could gain a negative perception, if not represented correctly in the community.”*
* *“Send more information out to the community and schools to get the word out about the program. Call parents of former Participants to see how things are going and to see if they are in need of services.”*

**What needs to change about Interface to make the program better for the participants and their families?**

* “Staff needs to be trained in intervention skills to efficiently deal with our participants. Some staff have never dealt with kids that have ADHD, ADD, OCD, and various other issues that kids face today. Some want to make friends with the kids and that’s their priority.”
* “I understand that funding may be an issue, but the kids need to be exposed to more. Many have not been outside the city limits. Educational programs and entertainment may help with allowing the kids to enjoy the experience more and take advantage of the opportunity being given. Forums where the kids can talk to the parents to help open lines of communication that may be broken.”
* “Possibly streamline the intake process. Although there are a lot of requirements, maybe there is a way to make it more condensed for upset parents or guardians so they don’t see it as a burden.

Many staff use their authority to an extreme degree, (although I know Participants need structure and discipline); I believe there needs to be more communication between staff members about the degree of their authoritative actions. I think some leniency is important for Participants that earn it, and I don’t always see it happening.”

* *“I think shelters overall do great with services for Participants and families. A lot of parents and former Participants will call for input and advice if the child is heading down the wrong path again.”*
* *“Unity; everyone on the same page. Enforce the rules with Participants and staff.”*
* *“Allocate funds for events and activities that will provide Participants and families opportunities to interact on various levels. What about a breakfast for guardians and Participants? [Low cost and manageable.]*

*Concentrate efforts for small group sessions for Participants with similar needs to do projects or go on outings together to bond and help each other.”*

* *“Where all staff communicates the same information. Problems occur when parents hear mixed information from different staff.”*
* *“Meetings like the one we’re having today.”*
* *“We as a shelter are making all the necessary things to make families and Participants welcome. Participants should be willing to come and participate in the program. The behavior system should be looked at; Participants don’t respect the system that’s in place.”*
* *“Update of the building. Have the families and staff meet to update family members on their kids. Make sure that the staff we do hire is here for the kids and not just a paycheck. Get more involved with participants and their families.”*
* *“More staff training on phone etiquette, decision making, teamwork, crisis intervention.*

*Training in the mental health arena/ crisis issues. I do not feel prepared for the scenarios I’m facing so I feel I have been less effective more often than not. For example: It’s difficult to address a bipolar youth when you don’t understand what that is.”*

* *“Identify their needs and develop ways to meet those needs with 100% delivery.”*
* *“Maybe more activities as a whole with current house Participants and their families. Ex. Cookouts, family building activities on a Saturday.*
* *“The way the program is basically a place for problem or bad children.”*
* *“Having group sessions with parents and kids together to understand the problems going on in the home.*

*Solve current issues when they occur and not when they’ve escalated.”*

* *We need to provide spectacular, unbiased care to these youth. Disregard every fact except for the fact that these families need help, and we need to help them the best way we possibly can, regardless of any other factors.”*
* *“The way we communicate with the Participants and their families. Offer more services, for example: programs for the parents to see what we do so they may use some of the skills we try and to teach Participants here, that it may carry on at home.”*

**What needs to change to improve the communication between the Interface team?**

* use yelling, harsh tones, or negative remarks to communicate with each other. We must be willing to stop talk talking behind each other’s backs and take constructive suggestions.”
* “Continued communication of goals and just constant communication altogether.”
* *“Maybe if all staff could receive a CDS email address, including Youth Care Workers, that would make it much easier to deal with (or communicate) possible problems at Interface.*

*A question aimed at improving Interface could be emailed to all YCW’s and responses could be discussed between everyone online.”*

* *“Staff needs to set aside personalities and egos and focus on having a strong and unified team to make it through the shifts, especially when the shelter is chaotic.”*
* *“Have meetings where staff are informed and also rewarded. To be on the same page regardless of upbringings. To remain professional even during ‘fun time’. To be respectful because it’s due when you’re in a professional setting. To have meetings every so often with YCW’s to inform and to speak in a setting that’s not derogatory or superficial. To be heard and maybe understand from a different perspective.”*
* *“Spend social time with coworkers.*

*Help coworkers to feel less fear for job issues by providing support from supervisors and coordinators.”*

* *“An environment where staff feel safe to share concerns.*

*Appropriate staffing where there is correct ratio as well as staff’s competence and personality (when possible). Often there will only be one female staff for a lot of escalated female Participants while the males will have two male staff for fewer escalated Participants.*

*Consistent shift exchange.”*

* *“Adults acting like adults. Everyone being able to put their personal feelings and thoughts about another to the side. Everyone being able to leave their personal issues at home. And be the best team player you can be.”*
* *“Shift exchange needs to improve between shifts. A communication log would help a lot.”*
* *“There are too many bosses that want to tell you what to do. Supervisors are not communicating with the staff on the type of kids coming to the house. The counselors think that they have all the answers to everything and so the YCWs don’t put their input in because it doesn’t count.”*
* *“I feel the issue has to do with professionalism. There are many here that have personal issues with fellow coworkers, so in turn, they do not assist or properly pass on information, leaving each other to sink or swim. I feel we do not have to like each other but we still need to complete our jobs properly and not feel as if our safety will be at risk during an incident because of a person’s dislike.”*
* *“People need to be open communicating with anyone regardless of personal feelings and receptive to guidance.*

*Communicate immediately when issues arise. Start with the person if possible and then move up the chain of command.”*

* *“We need more team commitment; we need to work together as a team.*

*Work with our coordinators so that our work is consistent.*

*We need team building activities to create comradery and unity; working together in unison.”*

* *“Paying more attention to the program log book. Staff needs to be more serious about job duties.”*
* *“Learn to get along. Listen to each other and work together better.”*
* *“All staff suggesting ways to deal with the issues at work with the participants and other work related problems, rather than one telling the others what to do. Also, when there are 3 staff on duty, there should be more helping between the male and female sides; all staff sharing duties.”*
* *“We have to be invested as a team and care enough about each other to help out one another. We must have more open lines of communication, and we must give more effort to communicating.”*
* *“More commitment from staff willing to be to work on time.*

*Maybe training.”*

* *“I think that the communication between supervisors and staff is broken; some information comes second hand or through hearsay. So I think if a problem should arise, staff needs to talk to a supervisor and not amongst each other.”*

**What information do supervisors need to know to improve things at Interface?**

* “Supervisors need to be more visible on the floor and be encouraging when there are extremely difficult houses. They need to handle situations when kids are extremely disrespectful to staff.”
* “Supervisors may need to know how to communicate on a level to help the participants understand. Give them the sense that they are being heard and not just talking.”
* *“More direct interaction between YCW’s and supervisors.*

*Maybe short meetings set up with individual YCW’s and supervisors.”*

* *“More staff on shifts evenings and nights.”*
* *“Staff should be informed of any compromising situation that could cause a distraction at the shelter. A supervisor should be available at all times to listen to staff when a situation arises and assured that the matter will be heard.”*
* *“Staff responsibility is overwhelming to some staff. Staff needs the supervisor and the coordinator out on the floor telling them when things are good too.”*
* *“Often times, staff doesn’t feel supported by supervisors even though they will verbally say they want staff to come to them. Their feeling is that they’re ‘attacked’ when they bring concerns or will be given more work to do.*

*Have a more selective hiring process to select more competent individuals as well as focus on getting more diverse. (It seems like a lot of hiring is done more from personal connections than the competency of an individual to do their job and have the necessary skills)”.*

* *“I think they need to know how we the staff can feel like our voices aren’t being heard and that we sometimes feel like the children get more support than us.”*
* *“Staff morale is low. Although money is tight, a raise would help the morale.”*
* *“That the staff needs to know that they have their back when we get kids that do not want to be in the program. Let the staff sit in on some of the interviews when the supervisors are screening for new hires because the staff that works with these kids have a better insight as to whether or not that person will be good for the program.”*
* *“I am seeing more and more staff having personal problems and not only bringing them to work but also having personal issues with other coworkers that affect the routine and collaboration of the team.”*
* *“As a whole ‘we’ are working against a very negative image in the community. Providing services is wonderful, but we need to change how we deal with escalated youth and change the trajectory of having youth come once they are fully escalated with JPD, etc. We need to have more prevention than intervention. As a staff member, I feel ill-equipped for a lot of needs.”*
* *“Enforce working together. Encourage or impact consistent in the workplace. Everyone needs to follow procedures. Enhance communication.”*
* *“Staff feels as if supervisors are ‘hardly on’ enough with Participants and staff are left with the dirty work.”*
* *“Some of the problems the children are having and ways we maybe can understand the issues they are having better.”*
* *-“That the duties at work are being left to one or two staff members to do, rather than all helping or assisting.*

*-We need to have adequate staffing when numbers are up in the program.”*

* *“Encourage staff to do what is right and also encourage staff to communicate with each other.”*
* *“The way new information is presented if there’s a change in the way things are being done or handled; not everyone can make it to the staff meeting. A memo or a letter in staff mailboxes notifying of a change would help.”*
* **Please share any additional comments, thoughts or concerns.**
* “I think we should listen to the participants in regards to ways they would like to be treated. They get different personalities from staff; some they like, some they don’t. It’s my belief that they are at an age that they will only respect those they feel they can relate to and/or who respect them as well and not just here to boss them around or treat them how they are being treated on the outside of the program.”
* *“I believe that better advertising would be beneficial.”*
* *“In the midst of fights and noncompliant behaviors from Participants, staff doesn’t feel safe. I would like to see a policy where kids that are beyond the scope of our intervention be dismissed from the program. There have been several fights that have threatened the well-being of staff members; this causes a lot of staff to not want to come to work.”*
* *“The feeling is almost as if the staff have swapped places between Participants and staff. There seems to be not enough coverage to supervise Participants, mainly when Participants are acting out and leaving their designated areas. This happens sometimes regardless if it’s the right participant/ staff ratio.”*
* *“Interface needs to adapt to the modern family mix that children come from and find solutions to lower the stress load for Participants.”*
* *“The kids need to be able to go out to the movies. They need to have fun. Staff can take the kids to places to show them that there are good things to do at the program and that someone cares about them.”*
* *“DOORS BLOCKING CAMERAS. There is an issue in the Participants’ living areas where the door will block the camera. This is placing staff and other Participants in a dangerous position when participants get out of control and are becoming or are acting physically aggressive towards others at IYPC.”*
* *“Morning shifts need 3 functional staff, especially when houses are escalated. While we may be in ratio, it’s of no benefit when those staff do not provide direct care; i.e. house manager, supervisor.”*
* *“Work as a team or become a free agent.”*
* *“Staff just needs to take their job more seriously and do their job duties when signed on to be hired.”*
* *“This is a good program, but it’s a place looked at like this is where the bad kids go. The best way I believe more children will come here is to lose that label, because maybe runaways may not have behavioral issues like the other kids in the shelter.”*
* *“I am ready to make a difference; I am ready to give 100% to make Interface a better place.”*