

northwest
youth services



The Positive Adolescent Development (PAD) Program

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www.nwys.org

Northwest Youth Services

- Mission:
 - NWYS collaborates with at-risk, runaway and homeless youth to foster self-reliance.
- Continuum of care:
 - Street Outreach Program
 - Transitional Living Program and Permanent Housing for youth aged 18-24
 - Vocational Support Programs
 - Teen Court
 - Emergency Shelter for youth aged 13-17

The PAD Program

- Emergency Shelter for at-risk, runaway and homeless youth aged 13-17
- 24 hour Group Care facility (not an overnight shelter)
- Parent or guardian signature required
- Licensed program through Washington State Children's Administration
- Short-term emergency stay (21 days) with possibility to apply for long-term program (up to 18th birthday)

License and Collaboration with Children's Administration

- Licensed vs. contracted
- Population we serve:
 - youth “falling through the cracks” of the child welfare/
foster system
- Spectrum of programs to meet spectrum of needs

Philosophy and Approach

- Harm Reduction
 - Offer youth a support system that allows freedom to make decisions and safe space to experience outcomes of those decisions
- Housing First
 - Low barrier
 - No “zero tolerance” requirement for substance use or mental health engagement
- Positive Youth Development
 - Young people are assets/resources rather than liabilities/recipients

Practical Application and Lessons Learned

- LOTS OF CHANCES
 - Self-Advocacy process
- Everything is a collaborative discussion
- High risk tolerance
- Community advocacy is necessary
- Youth come back to this program

Community Capacity and Harm Reduction

- Youth belong in the community and deserve to be seen as assets and celebrated for their strengths
- Creating opportunities for youth to integrate with community, rather than view NWYS as “safe haven” where they are away from the community
 - Law Enforcement

“The PAD Staff treat the program like it’s their second home. Everywhere else I stayed the staff acted like it was just a job, but it’s not like that here. They spend lots of time with us and help us do what we need like get into school. Everyone here wants to help me learn how to take care of myself so I can be independent when I am an adult. There’s rules and everything, but it’s not strict like other places. You guys give us a lot of freedom to make our decisions but you help us too. And you have to be willing to take the help. If you want the program to be easy and don’t want to do anything it’s not going to work for you, you have to work the program and work hard for your life. I kept coming back because it was close to home, but it was also the best program for me to be in.”

- PAD Youth

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Questions?

