

# **CHAPTER 21: SUPERVISION IN THE COMMUNITY**

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# SUPERVISION IN THE COMMUNITY


## DYS Community Re-entry Centers

Community Re-entry Centers (CRCs) are community-based centers that serve DYS-involved youth who live in the community (residing with a parent, guardian, or foster parent or residing in an independent living program). The primary purpose of CRCs is to provide youth with the intensive supervision and services they need to function and remain in the community. CRC staff provides case management, accountability and intervention services.

There are 38 CRCs across the state of Massachusetts. CRCs are run by DYS and vendors in partnership. Staff based at the CRC include DYS caseworkers. In certain more rural areas of the state, particularly in DYS's Western Region, DYS has Neighborhood Centers instead of CRCs. These centers function similarly to CRCs. CRCs were formerly called Day Reporting Centers.

CRCs serve youth who are released back to the community on a grant of conditional liberty. These youth will most likely need to visit a CRC at specified intervals. Failure to visit the CRC at the appropriate time can lead to a revocation of the grant. CRCs may also operate diversion programs with local Department of Children and Families offices, Juvenile Probation Departments and/or Police Departments.<sup>1</sup>

As part of a youth's introduction to CRC, a youth will participate in a formal intake meeting with the CRC community caseworker to review the expectations for the youth upon his return to the community. <sup>2</sup>

 **Tip for families:** Encourage your child to stay in close communication with his DYS case worker and other relevant CRC staff. Better communication helps DYS help your child.

In addition to providing supervision, staff at the CRC will provide programs for the youth and DYS will help the youth find employment and offer treatment programs. At some, but not all CRCs, DYS also offers anger management programs.

## DYS levels of supervision

When a youth is released from DYS confinement and is living in the community on a grant of conditional liberty, DYS will supervise the youth using a level system. This system establishes the nature of supervision

and the frequency of contact between the youth and DYS. If a youth does well at any given level of supervision, his supervision will be reduced until he is ready to be discharged from DYS.

DYS youth are released to the community at the appropriate level of supervision, with level four being the maximum supervision level and one being the minimum supervision level.<sup>3</sup>

The levels of supervision operate, according to DYS's guide for case managers, as follows:

- **Level 4:** Twenty-four hour supervision and face to face contact 5 to 6 times a week.
- **Level 3:** Daily contact and face to face contact a minimum of 3 times a week.
- **Level 2:** Community supervision and face to face contact a minimum of 1 time a week.
- **Level 1:** Community supervision and face to face contact a minimum of 1 time a month.<sup>4</sup>

DYS has a formal process, called Level Review Boards (LRBs), for reviewing a youth's level of supervision and determining whether a level change is needed.<sup>5</sup> Reviews are scheduled according to the youth's needs and participation in the service plan. There is no automatic step-down of levels at certain time intervals.<sup>8</sup>

The community caseworker submits written recommendations after receiving input from the youth's service providers.<sup>6</sup> The community caseworker may be part of the LRB. These reviews occur at the CRC or DYS Regional Office.<sup>7</sup>

If the youth is doing well and has met milestones, the youth's level of supervision will decrease and he will gain more independence from DYS.<sup>9</sup> With good behavior, the youth would be required to go to the CRC fewer and fewer days per week as the months progress. For example, the youth might first be required to go five days per week for 30 days, then three days per week for two months, then two days per week for six months, then one day per week for a period of time, and then one day every other week.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the caseworker may provide rewards to the youth.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, if the youth violates a condition or conditions of his grant, the DYS caseworker will typically impose graduated sanctions,

like moving the youth up a level of supervision, requiring community service, or adding electronic monitoring.<sup>12</sup> This response is not the same as revoking a grant of conditional liberty which requires a formal due process proceeding to occur first; instead, this is a response through which the DYS caseworker tries to avoid revoking the youth's liberty.

If the youth has a pattern of violations and does not respond to graduated sanctions, the caseworker may seek to revoke the grant of conditional liberty and pull the youth back into DYS. Typically, a revocation is sought when violations accumulate and/or the violations become more serious. While a youth initially may experience some leeway for violations of his grant, ultimately DYS may conclude that pursuing a response more serious than graduated sanctions is necessary.


Each CRC has its own manual that outlines what a youth must accomplish to move down a level of supervision and what will result in being moved up a level. The content of these manuals vary from CRC to CRC. CRC staff should provide the youth and his parent or legal guardian with a copy of the CRC's manual when the youth starts attending the CRC.

## **DYS monitoring of adherence to the grant of conditional liberty**

The youth's DYS caseworker, through the youth's visits to the CRC, will monitor a youth's adherence to the conditions of his grant of conditional liberty, such as curfew and school attendance. In addition, DYS also employs community monitors to monitor youth in the community on levels 3 and 4.<sup>13</sup>

Sometimes, DYS will want to make sure that a youth stays within a specific geographic area or that a youth is where he says he is at all times. DYS may equip a youth with a device, such as an electronic monitoring device or a beeper, to make sure that he stays within these limits. DYS also may place calls to a youth's employer to make sure the youth is going to work.

Youth visiting CRCs may be required to submit to drug testing. Failing a drug test does not automatically mean that the youth will be brought back to a facility, but it is possible.

 **Tip for families:** Nearly all committed youths testing positive for drugs test positive for marijuana, so if your child is using marijuana, take his drug use seriously.

## Endnotes

- 1 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 6.
- 2 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 31.
- 3 Correspondence from Jane E. Tewksbury, Department of Youth Services to MHLAC (Dec. 27, 2007).
- 4 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 32.
- 5 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 42.
- 6 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 42.
- 7 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 42.
- 8 Correspondence from Jane E. Tewksbury, Department of Youth Services to MHLAC (Dec. 27, 2007).
- 9 Correspondence from Jane E. Tewksbury, Department of Youth Services to MHLAC (Dec. 27, 2007).
- 10 DYS panel presentation, "Overview of DYS" in An Overview of DYS Advocacy, Juvenile Justice Center (June 6, 2007).
- 11 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 33.
- 12 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 33.
- 13 DYS, Case Management Reference Guide (Aug. 2006) at 11.

