

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The number of teen court programs is growing rapidly across the country as people realize the wide range of youth these programs can influence and the many benefits associated with them. With this increasing awareness will come increasing scrutiny, as programs are asked to prove their effectiveness while vying for limited resources. It is, therefore, essential that programs identify their purpose, goals, and objectives. The purpose of a program provides the framework that sets the direction of the program, while the goals and objectives provide a plan as to how the purpose will be achieved.

In addition, the program purpose and goals are the foundation upon which other program elements are defined, such as the target population and program services. Measurable objectives will provide programs with a mechanism for evaluating their results. Target population, program services, and program evaluation will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters, but they are mentioned here in order to draw attention to the interdependency of the steps and decisions in the program development process.

When developing a program's purpose, goals, and objectives, it may be helpful to understand the rationale and philosophy behind teen court programs. This chapter begins with a discussion of some of the recurring themes among teen court programs and concludes with practical information on developing a purpose, goals, and objectives for a teen court program.

Specifically, by the end of this chapter, readers will be able to

- ◆ discuss the concept behind the balanced approach mission and restorative justice model and explain its relation to goals of teen court programs;
- ◆ develop a purpose statement for a teen court program; and
- ◆ develop short- and long-term goals and measurable objectives for a teen court program.

THE BALANCED APPROACH MISSION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODEL

One of the emerging trends in juvenile justice is based on the concept known as the balanced approach mission and restorative justice model. In an attempt to provide equal attention to offenders, victims and the community, the balanced approach mission, according to Bazemore and Umbreit (1994), focuses on

- ◆ accountability;
- ◆ competency development; and
- ◆ community protection.

The philosophy of restorative justice is based on the following values and assumptions (McLagan, 1992, as cited in Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994):

- ◆ Offenders, victims, and the community should be included in the response to crime.
- ◆ Government and local communities should assume complementary roles in responding to crime.
- ◆ Accountability is based on offenders understanding the harm caused by their actions, accepting responsibility for the harm caused, and making amends.

It is through values espoused within this type of framework that goals of the balanced approach mission take on a more significant meaning (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). What is interesting to note is that these same goals (i.e., accountability, competency development, community protection) recur throughout the literature and program materials from teen court programs. Although they tout goals similar to

those found in the balanced approach mission, the majority of teen court programs, like many other juvenile justice agencies, have not implemented the elements inherent in this promising approach to their full potential. Programs that follow a balanced and restorative justice model provide a means for reconciling the interests of and meeting the mutual needs of victims, offenders, and the community (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994).

Implementing programs based on the balanced and restorative justice model can be an ominous task and often requires agencies to adopt a new way of viewing the roles of offenders, victims, and the community in the justice process (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). With consideration and active participation from other juvenile justice agencies, victims, and the community, teen court programs can offer jurisdictions an avenue to bring the philosophy of the balanced approach mission in juvenile justice into actual practice.

Accountability

Often society has difficulty determining where to affix the culpability for juvenile crime. Responsibility has been placed on parents, schools, the community, or the court system. Although each contributes to the problems that lead to juvenile crime, the individual responsibility of the youthful offender cannot be ignored. Families, schools, communities, and the juvenile justice system all must play a role in ensuring that youth accept responsibility and are held accountable for their actions.

Under the balanced approach mission, accountability refers to the need for offenders to make amends to victims for the losses caused by their delinquent actions. This entails not only the *action* of making amends through avenues such as community service or restitution, but also entails creating an *awareness* in youthful offenders of the harmful consequences their actions have on others, most notably victims (Bazemore, 1993). In cases coming before a

teen court program in which there is no identifiable victim, the message still should be sent to teen court defendants that their actions do affect others, including their families and the community as a whole.

What is missing in many teen court programs, however, is the link for offenders between the act of making amends and the awareness and understanding of why it is necessary to make amends.

Most teen court programs require youthful offenders to redress victims and the community for the harm caused through the provision of community service and, in some programs, through oral or written apologies to victims and monetary restitution (American Probation and Parole Association, 1994). What is missing in many teen court programs, however, is the link for offenders between the *act* of making amends and the awareness and understanding of *why* it is necessary to make amends. In its *Report and Recommendations to Victims of Juvenile Crime*, the American Correctional Association Victims Committee (1994, p.6) states: "In far too many cases, juvenile offenders leave the scene of their crimes without any inclination of the serious effects of their acts or the devastating impact their crimes have on their victims." Therefore, if a teen court program is to operationalize the goal of accountability to its fullest extent, it must not only create opportunities for youth to repay victims and the community, it also must build in an awareness component that educates youth on the impact their actions have on others, (i.e., victims and community).

In doing this, efforts should be made to involve the community and victims actively in the process (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). The community plays significant roles in holding offenders accountable by providing locations for offenders to complete community service hours and by providing offenders with paid work opportunities, increasing their ability to pay restitution. At a minimum, victims should

provide impact information (written or oral) on how the crime affected them. This information can be used during the sentencing phase to provide jurors with information to assist them in determining an appropriate sentence and to begin the process of personalizing the crime for the offender.

Competency Development

Under the balanced approach mission, the competency development goal emphasizes the need for offenders to leave the juvenile justice system with skills that will enable them to be productive participants in society (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). Additionally, Norem-Hebeisen and Hedin (1981) stress that to decrease delinquency, one goal of peer programs should be to provide at-risk youth with skills that aid them when they find themselves in situations in which problem behavior is encouraged and supported. Teen court programs can be effective in this area by teaching youth (i.e., youthful offenders and community youth) necessary life and coping skills and then offering a meaningful forum in which to use and refine those skills.

The goal is for young people to carry over and apply what they learn through teen court when confronted with other difficult choices and situations in their lives.

Throughout their participation in the program, teen court defendants and youth volunteers will be confronted by persons with differing viewpoints and backgrounds, which often mirror experiences and situations encountered in other aspects of their lives. At times, these differences may cause frustration; however, the way youth learn to react and respond to these differing viewpoints and personalities is all part of the learning process. The goal is for young people to carry over and apply what they learn through teen court when confronted with other difficult choices and situations in their lives.

Most teen court programs are designed to intervene early (usually after a first offense) in the delinquent behavior of a juvenile. Some ways in which teen court programs offer skill-building opportunities for youthful offenders is through requiring the performance of community service and participation in educational workshops. In addition to holding youth accountable, basic habits that the performance of community service can instill in youth include (Maloney and Bazemore, 1994)

- ◆ reporting to work on time;
- ◆ cooperating with coworkers;
- ◆ accepting constructive criticism; and
- ◆ successfully finishing a task.

Educational workshops can be designed and offered to defendants to assist them in developing needed skills in specific areas, such as managing conflict and problem solving. As a means to further the development, enhancement, and application of life skills, most teen court programs require or encourage offenders to participate as a volunteer in the program, usually in the role of a juror. The table is turned, and the delinquent youth is offered an opportunity to experience the other side of the justice system by determining consequences for a peer. Staff, who observe a youth's interaction with other jurors and teen court participants, can identify youth who are lacking in certain skill areas and who may need additional assistance or an informal referral for other services.

Teen court is not a mock trial; the cases that are heard are real. As a prevention program, teen court programs offer youth in the community valuable education and hands-on experience in the legal and judicial system. This places youth volunteers in positions that require a tremendous amount of responsibility. They assume roles that give them the power to make decisions that can have a direct impact on the lives of the teen court defendants. Through these roles, young

people can play an active part in addressing the problem of juvenile delinquency within their community.

Community Protection

The right of the public to a safe and secure community is at the heart of all justice programs in both the adult and juvenile systems. As a means to help ensure public safety, the balanced approach mission calls for a shared responsibility between the juvenile justice system and the community for the control and reintegration of offenders (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). By helping youth develop and enhance needed life and coping skills and educating them on the legal and judicial system, teen court programs can cause youth to adopt more prosocial attitudes, which ultimately can help protect the community.

This concept is illustrated by the personal statement in Figure 4-1. It was written by a 15-year-old girl who, before her involvement as a volunteer in the Buncombe County Teen Court Program in Asheville, North Carolina, had developed a pattern of shoplifting. She was never caught.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1993) based a major component of its *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* on the premise that to effectively handle delinquent behavior, there must be a range of graduated sanctions and a full continuum of treatment and rehabilitative services. Aside from assisting community youth to develop needed skills to resist the pressures to participate in illegal activity, teen court programs promote public safety by offering jurisdictions an alternative program to juvenile court for nonviolent, misdemeanor cases. The rationale for doing so is that the number of cases being heard in juvenile court will decrease, and more time will be allotted for juvenile court to hear more serious cases.

SAMPLE STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

After considering the philosophy and rationale behind teen courts, program developers need to translate the philosophy into practice. Each

Figure 4-1: Personal Statement of a Youth Teen Court Volunteer

A few years ago I started hanging out with some guys that always got into trouble with the police. I knew what they were doing was wrong, but I didn't know exactly what would happen if we were caught. It didn't take long for me to get used to their ways and fit in well. When we would go into a store, I always knew my part, and no one else ever messed up either. We never got caught, and after a while we all got very cocky about things.

There was one time when we went into a store five times in a row, and the last two times there was a police officer in there. It didn't bother us; we just tried to get as much as we could and if we got caught, well, really we thought that the police were too stupid to catch us. The way we thought was an ignorant way of thinking, because a week after that my friends were caught at another store, I, fortunately, was not with them, but it got me to thinking. What if I had been with them? If I had been caught, what would have happened? Even though it got me thinking, I didn't quit doing those types of things. I still wasn't sure what could happen if I was caught.

Once teen court started in Asheville, I got into it. I learned about what could have happened if I was caught, and that was when I decided not to do anything illegal again. If it hadn't been for teen court, I would never have learned about the consequences of doing wrong things and I would probably still be doing them.

jurisdiction should consider the philosophy within the context of its own community needs and resources. Blindly implementing a program based on its apparent success in other jurisdictions is a simplistic solution that ultimately may prove ineffective (Cochran, 1989).

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It is advisable to include agency staff and stakeholders of the program (those who are supportive of the program's efforts as well as those who may be resistant) in the process of developing the purpose, goals, and objectives. If a program is being developed within an existing agency, the program purpose must be in accordance with all other aspects of the overseeing agency's mission and must be acceptable to all involved with the program. According to Crowe and Schaefer (1992), some issues that may need to be evaluated by program developers in this process include

- ◆ the overall mission of the agency implementing the program;
- ◆ legal issues that may affect the program; and
- ◆ limitations of community and program resources.

The following section outlines the process of developing a program's purpose, goals, and objectives. When possible, examples used reflect concepts related to the earlier discussion of the balanced approach mission and restorative justice model.

Program Purpose

A teen court program's viability depends on its ability to address a pressing local problem. It is crucial that a teen court program focus on needs within its jurisdiction that can be addressed

realistically. This will enable agencies to develop manageable, effective programs. The following two primary questions can help program developers limit the scope of a program to something that is realistic and achievable (Fulton, Stone, and Gendreau, 1994):

- ◆ What deficiencies are we trying to overcome?
- ◆ Which ones can we realistically overcome given the existing resources and level of support?

A clearly articulated statement identifying the primary purpose of the program will assist agencies in remaining focused on achievable and congruent goals. The purpose statement for any program, like an agency mission statement, should clearly state the primary purpose of the program and the population for whom it is designed. It also should include a very brief and general description of the services it will provide (Fulton, Stone, and Gendreau, 1994). A sample teen court purpose statement may be found in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2: Sample Teen Court Program Purpose Statement

The Teen Court Program is a community-based intervention/prevention program designed to provide an alternative response for the juvenile justice system for first-time, nonviolent, misdemeanor juvenile offenders, in which community youth determine the appropriate sanctions for the offender. The program will hold youthful offenders accountable and provide educational services to offenders and youth volunteers in an effort to promote long-term behavioral change that leads to enhanced public safety.

Program Goals

Program goals are broad, general statements that serve to map out the future and provide a measure of success in achieving the program

purpose. They should clarify the intentions of the program and direct program activities. It is recommended that agencies apply the following guidelines when developing goals for teen court programs:

- ◆ Focus the goals according to the target population and program services provided.
- ◆ Carefully select the goals of a teen court program based on prioritized needs and available resources.
- ◆ Differentiate short- and long-term goals.

A further discussion of these guidelines reveals how their application can enhance the credibility of teen court programs.

Focusing on Target Population and Services to Be Provided

When developing goals, program developers should keep in mind the target population the program is designed to serve. If a program decides to target first-time offenders, the goals and objectives of the program may differ from those of programs targeting repeat offenders who may need more intensive services. Target population and program services are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Basing Goals on Prioritized Needs and Available Resources

Stakeholder desires and jurisdictional needs should not be ignored. However, agencies must examine and prioritize these needs. This requires an examination of the needs of youth in the community and a determination of which needs are not currently being met through other means and could be met through teen court. Funding and community resources need to be examined to ascertain if the identified needs can be met with existing resources or if the development of resources is feasible. Realistic goals that address a specific and important need then can be established. (See Figure 4-3.)

Figure 4-3: Sample Teen Court Program Goals - Based on a Prioritized Need

Prioritized Need:	A program to address the problem of underage drinking and illegal drug use in the community.
Long-term goal:	To decrease the number of youth in the community engaging in alcohol and illegal drug use.
Short-term goal:	To intervene early, provide education to, and promote awareness among youth of the dangers of substance abuse.

Differentiating Between Short- and Long-Term Goals

Program developers may find it helpful to differentiate between short- and long-term goals of the teen court program. Some goals may have a rehabilitative focus associated with long-term behavior change. These may be easier to evaluate if refocused and broken down into short-term goals that support the long-term goal. Also, it may be easier to sustain internal and external program support if people can see goals being achieved in the short-term. Figure 4-4 provides an example.

Figure 4-4: Sample Teen Court Program Long- and Short-Term Goals

Long-term goal:	Improve the capacity of youth to become responsible and productive citizens.
Short-term goal:	Provide youth with education and hands-on experience in the judicial systems.
Short-term goal:	Increase life and coping skills of youth in the community.
Long-term goal:	Protect the community.
Short-term goal:	Hold youthful offenders accountable.

Program Objectives

Objectives are crucial to effective program implementation and evaluation. Program objectives specify how program goals will be achieved and should include a method for evaluating results. While program goals should clearly state the intentions of a program, objectives should describe the mechanisms and strategies used to accomplish those intentions.

Specific and measurable objectives should be assigned to each major goal area. Objectives should be achieved within a limited time and be identified with an actual result. It is recommended that teen court objectives be result-oriented rather than activity-oriented (Crowe and Schaefer, 1992; Fulton, Stone, and Gendreau, 1994). Some sample goals and objectives may be found in Figure 4-5.

Figure 4-5: Sample Teen Court Program Goals and Objectives

Long-term goal:	Improve the capacity of youth to become responsible and productive citizens.
Short-term goal:	Provide youth with education and hands-on experience in the judicial system.
objective 1:	90% of youth attending the five-week teen court training seminar will pass a teen court bar exam.
objective 2:	All youth volunteers will be scheduled to participate in a teen court trial/hearing within three months of passing their bar examination.
Short-term goal:	Increase life and coping skills of youth in the community.
objective 1:	30% of the ongoing youth volunteer pool will consist of past teen court defendants by the end of fiscal year 1996.
objective 2:	85% of youth volunteers will complete a six-week life skills class during fiscal year 1996.
Long-term goal:	Protect the community.
Short-term goal:	Hold youthful offenders accountable.
objective 1:	All referrals to the teen court program will be docketed and heard in teen court within five weeks of the referral.
objective 2:	During fiscal year 1996, 80% of teen court defendants will successfully complete their community service hours within 90 days of their sentence.
objective 3:	80% of all restitution payments scheduled to be made during fiscal year 1996 will be collected.
objective 4:	During fiscal year 1996, 60% of teen court defendants will complete a four-week victim awareness class.
Long-term goal:	Decrease the number of youth in the community engaging in alcohol and illegal drug use.
Short-term goal:	Intervene early, provide education to, and promote awareness among youth of the dangers of substance abuse.
objective 1:	During fiscal year 1996, 95% of all teen court defendants charged with an alcohol/drug offense will attend a Mothers Against Drunk Driving victim impact panel.
objective 2:	80% of all teen court defendants will successfully complete a four-week substance abuse awareness program.
objective 3:	A pretest and three-month followup test (designed to assess change in knowledge and attitude about alcohol and drug use among adolescents) will be administered to all participants of the substance abuse awareness program. 80% of participants will show a positive change in knowledge and attitude relative to alcohol and drug use.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of a program's purpose, goals, and objectives is critical to effective program implementation and evaluation. Without a carefully considered purpose and goals, the program will lack a clear direction and eventually may find its existence called into question.

The sample purpose, goals, and objectives provided in this chapter are based on the earlier

discussion of the balanced approach mission. Individual teen court programs should develop realistic and achievable goals that reflect the program's philosophical basis, jurisdictional differences, and target population. Establishing reasonable goals and objectives will require more work during the planning and development stages to ascertain what improvement rates are achievable, given the program aims and resources. However, this investment of time and effort should pay off in the long run with a more effective program.

CHECKLIST FOR PROGRAM PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Have teen court program organizers or staff —

- Developed an understanding of the balanced approach mission and the restorative justice model?

Howard Zehr (1990, pp. 230-231) developed the following “Restorative Justice Yardstick” as a means for providing juvenile justice agencies with guidance in moving closer to values and policies consistent with the restorative justice model. These questions should be examined while keeping in mind the objectives of the balanced approach mission (i.e., accountability, competency development, community protection).

- Do victims experience justice?*
 - Are there sufficient opportunities for them to tell their truth to relevant listeners?*
 - Are they receiving needed compensation or restitution?*
 - Is the injustice adequately acknowledged?*
 - Are they sufficiently protected against further violation?*
 - Does the outcome adequately reflect the severity of the offense?*
 - Are they receiving adequate information about the event, the offender, and the process?*
 - Do they have a voice in the process?*
 - Is the experience of justice adequately public?*
 - Do they have adequate support from others?*
 - Are their families receiving adequate assistance and support?*
 - Are other needs — material, psychological, spiritual — being addressed?*
- Do offenders experience justice?*
 - Are they encouraged to understand and take responsibility for what they have done?*
 - Are misattributions challenged?*
 - Are they provided encouragement and opportunity to make things right?*
 - Are they given the opportunity to participate in the process?*
 - Is there encouragement toward changed behavior (repentance)?*
 - Is there a mechanism for monitoring or verifying changes?*
 - Are their own needs being addressed?*
 - Are their families receiving support and assistance?*
- Is the victim-offender relationship addressed?*
 - Is there opportunity for a meeting, if appropriate — either direct or therapeutic?*
 - Is there opportunity and encouragement for an exchange of information — about the event, about one another?*
 - Are misattributions being challenged?*

- Are community concerns being taken into account?*
 - Is the process and outcome sufficiently public?*
 - Is community protection being addressed?*
 - Is there need for some restitution or symbolic action for the community?*
 - Is the community represented in some way in the process?*
- Is the future being addressed?*
 - Is there provision for solving the problems that led up to this event?*
 - Is there provision for solving problems caused by this event?*
 - Have future intentions been addressed?*
 - Is there provision for monitoring, verifying, and troubleshooting outcomes?*
- Developed a purpose statement?
 - Determined the deficiencies or areas of need within the community? (Note: Refer to the needs and resources assessment discussed in Chapter 2.)
 - Determined which deficiencies or areas of need can be realistically addressed.
 - Determined who the program is designed to serve? (Note: Chapter 5 discusses determining a target population in more detail.)
 - Decided what services will be provided by this program? (Note: Chapter 6 discusses designing program services in more detail.)
- Developed program goals?
 - Developed goals that focus on the target population to be served and the program services to be provided?
 - Categorized goals according to short- and long-term goals?
 - Prioritized goals according to needs and available resources?
- Developed program objectives?
 - Developed objectives that specify how the program goals will be achieved?
 - Developed objectives that include a method for evaluating results?
 - Established a time frame within which the objectives will be achieved?
 - Defined objectives that are results-oriented, rather than activity-oriented?