



FRIDAY COURT

Policies and Protocols

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OVERVIEW

Description:

Friday Court (FC) is a specialized court for youth¹ who are identified as either at-risk of or victims of human trafficking who find themselves involved in either the dependency or delinquency systems. This program was created to provide youth with support, resources, and tools to be able to work on their goals and be able to make healthy choices for their future. The program is based on the values of choice and voice and is structured around the youth's self-identified goals, with the intention of providing them with tools and support to achieve those goals. Friday Court is a voluntary program, and dependent on the youth's willingness to actively participate in services.

Friday Court is held every other Friday, with in-custody hearings usually held in the mornings and out-of-custody hearings held in the afternoon. Staffings are held on the Wednesday prior to Friday Court, without the judicial officer. Reports on participant status and progress are provided to the judicial officer on the Thursday prior to Friday Court. While being at risk of or involvement in human trafficking qualifies a youth for this program, this is generally not discussed during court hearings. Instead, the focus of the court hearing and program is on supporting the youth in establishing a safety plan and making progress on their self-identified goals.

¹ Youth may include non-minor dependents in juvenile delinquency or dependency systems

Friday Court is designed to be a strength-based, empowering, and trauma-informed program. The focus of the program is on strategic goal-planning and safety planning for the youth.

What Everyone on the Team Should Know:

- Consistency is absolutely essential and the integral piece with all providers, staff, and youth in Friday Court.
- Due to the uniqueness of each youth and their set of circumstances, services need to be tailored to each youth based on their needs and what will keep them safe, empower them, and help them become successful in their future. The team must remain flexible in their approach to be able to adapt to the unique needs of this population.
- Everything is confidential that is shared in the meetings on and off the record. This does not include the information shared between the youth and the youth's attorney in the course of their attorney-client relationship. Each team member has a specific role they play in the youth's success and although there may be disagreements, it is essential to remember the common goal of assisting the youth in reaching their individual goals (i.e. off probation, knowing their worth, long-term success, strength, power, courage, etc.)
- It will take time for the youth to be able to trust anyone they work with. Due to everything they have been through prior to being trafficking, in combination with the complex-compound trauma of being commercially sexually exploited—these youth do not trust anyone easily. Time and consistency are key to establishing trust and working effectively with this population.

- Once gained, trust can be easily lost and difficult to re-establish. The easiest and most common way of losing trust with this population is not following through on something said and/or promised. Team members should not make guarantees unless there is absolute certainty about follow-through.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Friday Court Steering Committee meets quarterly to discuss the status of the program, updates to procedures, and review any needed changes to protocols.

Additionally, the Steering Committee reviews recommendations from both the Youth Advisory Council and Service Provider Roundtable for implementation.

Members:

Presiding Judge of Juvenile Delinquency

Presiding Judge of Juvenile Dependency

Collaborative Court Coordinator

Juvenile Division Manager

Public Defender's Office

District Attorney's Office

Juvenile Services Division Director, Probation Department

Juvenile Campus Divisions Director, Probation Department

Deputy Director or Designee, Department of Behavioral Health

Victim Services Manager, Probation Department

V.I.C.E. Sergeant, Fresno Police Department

Central Valley Against Human Trafficking Program Manager, Fresno Economic

Opportunities Commission

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide specialized resources to systems-involved youth that have been identified as either at-risk for or victims of human trafficking in order to decrease their vulnerability of further exploitation.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Provide a trauma-informed court setting to mitigate the frequent re-traumatization of victims and survivors finding themselves in juvenile delinquency and dependency systems
- Empower participating youth in identifying and reaching their own goals and connect the youth to mentorship opportunities in their field(s) of interest
- Provide both trauma and survivor-informed services to participating youth, including case management, education, group curriculum, and access to other resources
- Increase successful outcomes for participating youth: increasing high school completion rates, reducing truancy, reducing recidivism, reducing runaway rates, and reducing in-custody wait times
- Connect participating youth with safe individuals who can assist the youth in building their support network beyond the Friday Court program, and increase participants' knowledge of other community resources for an expanded and comprehensive safety plan

- Provide access for all identified youth to specialized anti-trafficking services for an initial assessment and safety plan
- Increase the capacity of justice partners to identify youth who are either at risk of or victims of human trafficking in both the juvenile delinquency and dependency systems through various screening tools and other collaborative efforts

TEAM MEMBER ROLES

Friday Court is a collaborative program, made up of multiple justice partners and community-based organizations. All team members have specialized training in human trafficking and trauma-informed practices.

- Judicial Officer: preside over the Friday Court calendar, prepare for the hearings by reviewing both the Friday Court team report and probation/child welfare report. Make final decisions on team recommendations in court hearings. Participate in justice partner and community outreach and education about human trafficking. Confer regularly with both the Friday Court Coordinator and Juvenile Court manager and make final decisions on administrative matters, including authorization of forms, procedures, and protocols. Facilitate quarterly Steering Committee meetings and attend other local program to provide education on the Friday Court program.
- Collaborative Court Coordinator: Act as liaison between justice partners, community-based organizations, court, and other Friday Court team members. Manage Friday Court inbox, and provide referrals to treatment providers. Facilitate MDT staffings and prepare reports for the judicial officer. Facilitate

service provider roundtable meetings and the youth advisory council, providing updates and recommendations to the Steering Committee. Collect both baseline and ongoing data on youth participants, and provide current updates on status of program to Friday Court team and Steering Committee. Manage Friday Court Dashboard: creating youth profile pages, opening up access for Friday Court team members, and sending referrals to treatment providers.

Provide technical assistance to Friday Court team, coordinate additional training opportunities when available, and provide education on the Friday Court program.

- District Attorney: Uphold the laws of the state of California, in addition to holding those that have broken the laws accountable for their actions. Along with probation, often ask that sanctions be imposed as a way to help the youth rehabilitate. Serve as a support person and work together with the team to keep the youth on track and productive in a new and healthy way. It is a balancing act of holding the youth accountable for their actions while also being supportive in their efforts to change. The assigned deputy district attorney will attend all staffings and serve as a member of the steering committee.
- Minor's Counsel: Provide legal representation and advocacy for youth in the delinquency or dependency systems who are at risk or are victims of human trafficking. In delinquency, represent the express interests and needs of youth to the team members and during court hearings. Assist the Collaborative group in ideas that will help client be successful, safe and empower them in Friday Court while ensuring the youth's Constitutional and Statutory rights are being upheld.

Assist the Collaborative group in coming up with ideas that will help make Friday Court more successful in assisting youth in the future.

- Probation Department: Ensure court mandates are being met, while providing support for youth at risk or victims of human trafficking. Work closely and communicate regularly with all parties, including: the youth, parents, service providers, and the Court. Maintain consistent contact via phone or face to face with the youth on a weekly basis in order to develop a trusting and respectful relationship with each individual to ensure their goals and needs are being met. Probation officers also attend each Friday Court as a Court Officer and staffings to provide updates on the youth's status.
- Department of Behavioral Health: DBH staff are available to conduct mental health assessments on a case-by-case basis as ordered by the court. DBH provides mental health history, which includes current/past psychotropic medications and mental health treatment. DBH provides clinical opinions regarding mental health and treatment recommendations when necessary. DBH staff also act as a liaison between Children's Mental Health and other mental health providers and the Friday Court Team.
- Child Welfare Services: For Probation youth- Social Worker is present at Friday Court staffings and Court proceedings to provide Child Welfare history as it pertains to the youth. Social Worker is available to communicate the policies and procedures of Child Welfare as well as maintain a liaison type role for any probation youth with Child Welfare dependent children. The Social Worker may also attend Child Welfare meetings as well as update the Child Welfare Case Manager on Friday Court proceedings. For Dependency youth: Commercially

Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Social worker and CSEC Social Work Supervisor will assess all referrals for Friday Court. Social Worker is present at Friday Court staffings and Court proceedings to provide updated information on the youth as well as identify any areas that may require additional support from the Friday Court team. Social Worker will maintain communication with the case managing social worker to provide additional support on CSEC related services. Prior to each Court proceeding, the Social Worker will meet with the youth to discuss any concerns or achievements that correlate to the youth's specific Court goals and to ensure his or her needs are being met.

- Victim Services: Victim Advocate participates in staffings and provides any new/updated Crime Victim Assistance Center info on youth(s), if applicable, collaborating with all Friday Court team members. Advocate will explain CVAC services, including Cal VCB, to parent/guardian/youth (to those who have been identified by CSE-IT tool as exploited). Advocate attends Friday Court when an exploited youth is calendared to be screened. In addition, the advocate follows up on adult and/or juvenile criminal case that may be pending and provide court support as requested.
- Service Provider: To provide advocacy, case management and resources to victims of human trafficking and/or at-risk individuals. Service providers have undergone intense training in working with victims and survivors of human trafficking in order to address needs of Friday Court participants. Case management includes the development of a safety plan, mentorship, creation of goals and plans to reach those goals, including connection to referrals and resources needed to meet those goals. Service provider reports back to Friday

Court team at staffing on the progress of youth, including their progress on their self-identified goals. Service providers utilize trauma-informed empowerment services to promote healing and growth with the goal of self-sufficiency.

TARGET POPULATION

Friday Court is designed for youth identified as either at-risk of or victims of human trafficking who are in either the delinquency or dependency systems. Youth may be identified as a potential victim and/or at-risk youth through various sources. These sources include: probation and/ or social services interviews, self-disclosures, law enforcement investigations, family interviews, a community member, a non-governmental organization, etc. At the time of this writing [6-2019] Probation uses an assessment tool from West Coast Children's Clinic called Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT) to assess for risk beyond what a youth discloses.

There are multiple risk factors that place youth at a significant risk for human trafficking and make them eligible for Friday Court services. Three of the highest risk factors, any of which identify the youth as high-risk for exploitation are: known family/associates in the sex trade, history of being exploited (i.e. by a stripping company, and significant history of running away (specifically considering the frequency, duration, and location). Other risk factors include: gang affiliations, significantly older boyfriend(s), unexplained influx of cash and multiple cell phones, homelessness, tattoos that appear to be “branding”, history of sexual and/or physical abuse, and frequency of travel to high-trafficking areas such as Oakland, Sacramento, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Diego. A history of engagement in

commercial sexual exploitation automatically makes a youth eligible for Friday Court services.

ELIGIBILITY AND SUITABILITY CRITERIA

Friday Court is designed for youth who have been identified as either high-risk or confirmed victims of human trafficking. It is not designed to accept youth who are low or medium risk, due to the potential risk of cross-recruitment with other youth and the stigma that could be associated with Friday Court.

To be considered both eligible and suitable for Friday Court, the youth and their family must be willing to actively participate with both the Friday Court team and treatment provider.

ENTRY PROCESS AND PHASE STRUCTURE

Friday Court is designed for youth in either the juvenile delinquency or dependency systems. As such, the general referral and program process may vary between the two different systems.

Referrals and Screenings:

Youth can be referred to Friday Court through the Probation Department, their attorney, and/or Child Welfare Services. Once a request is made in court, the matter is set on the Friday Court calendar for screening. An email is sent to the Friday Court inbox (fridaycourt@fresno.courts.ca.gov) with the youth's information, along with the referral form from the attorney if it is available. The Coordinator then sends a referral to one of the service providers for an initial assessment. This assessment includes a needs assessment, safety plan, and any emergency referrals that the youth is in need of.

Referrals are assigned on a rotating basis but take into account agency capacity at time of the referral.

The youth is initially screened prior to the Friday Court date- with input from all the justice partners and the assigned service provider who has conducted or will conduct an assessment. Factors that are taken into consideration are history of commercial sexual exploitation, risk factors, and the CSE-IT score, if it is available. The team discusses the suitability and eligibility of the youth, and provides their recommendation to the judicial officer. The final decision of acceptance into the Friday Court program is made at the screening court hearing by the judicial officer.

Acceptance:

If the youth is willing to participate in the Friday Court program, and is found suitable by the team, they may be accepted. On the initial court date, the youth will be given their first assignment known as the goal sheet. This assignment is for the youth to write down three things they have achieved that they are proud of, and three goals they have to be completed by the end of their time in Friday Court. The youth may be assisted by their assigned case manager in this assignment. These three goals shall then become their three stages. In addition to these goals, each stage also has its individual benchmarks, as follows:

Stage 1: Safe Me

1. Create a safety plan
2. Enrollment in school
3. Begin engaging in services

*Not eligible to promote in custody if serving less than 45 day commitment.

Stage 2: Safe Us

1. School attendance
2. Appropriate interpersonal behaviors (in school, home, group home, juvenile hall, etc.)
3. Engaging in mental health—this can be accomplished through group curriculum, crisis counseling, and/or trauma therapy

Stage 3: Safe Team

1. Connected to a mentorship opportunity
2. Knowledge of other community resources and expanded safety plan
3. Community engagement

Graduation

Upon graduation from Friday Court, a youth's placement is typically finalized and probation terminated. Their case may be sealed through a 786 hearing, and a special graduation ceremony is held. The youth is given a certificate of graduation, a book signed by the team, a necklace hand-crafted by survivors of human trafficking and, upon availability, other final incentives.

TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Upon the initial referral to Friday Court, each participant is assigned to work with a case manager from one of the partnering community-based service provider agencies. This case manager may assist the youth in working towards achieving their self-identified goals as well as the three individual benchmarks within each stage. Case management may also include assistance with transportation, placements, and referrals to various other community resources.

Changing Service Providers Protocol

Due to various reasons, youth may express a desire to change their case managers and/or service providers. Below are the steps outlined by the Friday Court team in order to initiate and complete this process.

1. If the youth is uncomfortable with their assigned provider, they may notify their social worker, attorney, and/or probation officer and request a change. The youth must explain what the issue(s) are and explain why they would like to have a different case manager.
2. The social worker, probation officer, or attorney will contact the provider directly to notify them of the request, as well as explaining what the issue(s) is in order to confirm the validity and give the provider an opportunity to address this issue with the youth.
3. The request will be discussed at the next staffing of the youth's case, and the team will make a decision if the provider switch is in the best interest of the youth and contribute to their progress forward. If yes, the team will proceed to the *advocate transition meeting*. If no, the team will discuss how to empower and encourage the youth to improve their relation with their assigned provider.
4. *Advocate Transition Meeting*: the youth will meet with previous advocate, new advocate, Court Coordinator, and- upon availability, probation officer or social worker for the purposes outlined below:
 - a. Discuss case management plan- services being provided, needs, goals for a smooth and trauma-informed transition.
 - b. Allow the youth an opportunity to discuss what is going to be different with the new provider for increased accountability in their own role in case management

- c. Show the youth a united team approach to demonstrate that the team is committed to the youth's success as well as empowering the youth to have a voice in changing their providers, explain their concerns, and have control over their case management plan

SURVIVOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

In June 2019, the Court Innovation Grant funds were extended for additional services to include survivor mentorship for Friday Court participants. This additional service program will be provided as long as funds allow. This program will allow for each participant to be matched with a survivor of human trafficking, who has been engaging in services for several years and can serve as a mentor for the youth throughout their Friday Court programming. This program will also allow survivor mentors to facilitate trauma-informed and therapeutic group activities in the Friday Court waiting room to engage the youth, as well as plan and facilitate Empowerment Events for participants in good standing.

INCENTIVES

Youth in the Friday Court program may receive several incentives throughout their participation in the program. The incentives will be coordinated by the Collaborative Court Coordinator, who will communicate with the Friday Court team to inform them of the options that are available and assist with the delivery of the incentive to the youth and/or their family members if the youth is not able to receive the incentive directly in court. Incentives will be given at promotions into the next stage, individualized to each youth, and ideally given as a means to having an experience with a safe, healthy adult in the youth's life, or any other significant, healthy relationships. In-between incentives

shall also be available to the youth to acknowledge exceptional effort and participation of the minor and/or family members in treatment.

TERMINATION CRITERIA

Youth who no longer wish to participate in the Friday Court program shall be terminated, as it is a voluntary program. A lack of willingness to participate may be communicated to the youth's social worker, probation officer, attorney, and/or service provider. The lack of participation and follow through with services and providers may indicate that the youth does not wish to be an active participant, and may need to be terminated from the program. In addition, an issuance of a warrant by probation as a result of a youth running away is automatic grounds for termination from the program. Termination from Friday Court does not preclude service providers from continuing to engage in and provide services to the youth.

STAFFINGS AND REPORTS

Staffings for Friday Court cases are held on the Wednesday afternoon prior to Friday Court in the Juvenile Justice Campus Conference Room A123. Staffings include all Friday Court team members, with the exception of the judicial officer to allow the team to share additional information regarding the youth's exploitation. Law enforcement may participate in the screenings for new Friday Court referrals. Team members provide updates regarding the youth's progress in treatment services, any immediate issues, and progress on their self-identified goals. Information shared during these staffings is confidential, and under the same guidelines as confidential juvenile court proceedings.

There are two reports submitted to the judicial officer, and distributed to the team: the probation report for delinquency youth regarding the youth's performance on probation, and the staffing report, which is prepared by the Court Coordinator. This staffing report includes updates from the service provider, as well as team concerns, commendations, and recommendation.

REVIEW HEARINGS

Friday Courts are set for every other Friday, with in-custody hearings held in the mornings and out of custody youth appearing for the afternoon calendar. Cases are typically set for review no more than six (6) weeks apart for out of custody hearings and two (2) weeks apart for in custody hearings, depending on each youth's individual needs. Whenever possible, the youth will be given the option of when they would like for the next court date to be set.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Friday Court proceedings shall follow the same confidential juvenile proceedings guidelines. These hearings are not open to the public, and any individual wishing to observe Friday Court shall seek permission from the Coordinator and/or judicial officer. All visitors sign a confidentiality agreement provided by the Coordinator. Service providers and individual agencies are subject to their own confidential procedures.

Youth will be informed of their confidential rights by their attorney. Upon acceptance into Friday Court, the youth shall grant permission for the electronic sharing of information via the Friday Court dashboard. This dashboard is a special tool that will

be utilized by the Friday Court team for case management purposes, and the tracking of local resources.

EMPOWERMENT EVENTS

Throughout the Friday Court program, the team may coordinate "Empowerment Events" for the Friday Court participants, depending on staff and funding availability. All youth who are in active participation and out-of-custody are eligible to participate in these events. Ideas for the events may be provided by the Youth Advisory Council, active Friday Court participants, and/or the Friday Court team and will be coordinated through a collaborative effort of the team. ²These events may be special outings and/or field trips, hosted activities, or other options with the intention of empowering the participants to find their individual strengths and interests..

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission: Central Valley Against Human Trafficking
Breaking the Chains
Central Valley Justice Coalition
Fresno Police Department Chaplaincy STEALTH Program

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Objective

² While grant funds are available, a designated service provider will take the lead on coordinating these event. During periods of no funding, the team is responsible for the coordination

To provide feedback on the current protocols and procedures of Friday Court, provide recommendations on incentives, special events, and other related activities, as well as providing recommendations for changing the protocols and procedures and/or improving Friday Court to be more survivor- and youth-informed. These recommendations will be presented to the Friday Court Steering Committee for implementation.

Qualifications

The following criteria must be met In order for the youth to qualify for consideration for the youth advisory board:

- successfully terminated from Friday Court and/or graduate from Friday Court
- be willing to participate in Advisory Council
- continuing to work towards success on their own goals (receiving services from a provider, in school, etc)

Incentives

As part of participating in the Advisory Council, participants will receive a gas card and/or LYFT code for each meeting. Participants will also have the opportunity to include their involvement in this special group on their resumes if desired to demonstrate their leadership roles.

Protocols

Each youth will be informed of the opportunity to participate in the Advisory Council upon graduating from Friday Court. This opportunity may be presented by their probation officer, social worker, service provider, attorney and/or any other member of the Friday Court team. The judicial officer will discuss the Advisory Council with the youth during their final court dates. Youth will be encouraged to discuss this opportunity

with their service provider, to ensure their willingness and capacity to participate. Youth will then be contacted by the Coordinator to confirm their willingness and ability to participate. The Coordinator will provide the date, location, and additional information about the Advisory Council.

Once confirmed, the youth will be provided transportation assistance through Grant funds in the form of a gas card and/or LYFT code. Participants will meet in person on a regular basis, with the option of meeting more often telephonically. Meetings will be co-facilitated by the Coordinator and Department of Social Services CSEC liaison, and attended by the Judicial Officer and/or other Friday Court team members, upon availability.

Meetings will be a roundtable discussion of the current challenges in Friday Court, suggestions for improving procedures and protocols, and ideas on youth incentives and events. In order to protect confidentiality, participants may not discuss any other Friday Court youth or disclose personal information about others. Participants may provide feedback about working with this specific population, offering insight into successful approaches and/or services that would lead to more successful outcomes. After meeting, the Coordinator will be responsible for documenting the suggestions and feedback in a written summary, and reporting back to the Friday Court team and Steering Committee. Recommendations will be implemented as deemed appropriate by the Steering Committee. Results of the recommendations will be shared with the youth at the next Youth Advisory Council meeting.

Members of the Youth Advisory Council may voluntarily leave the Council at any time. Additionally, if a member is unresponsive (i.e. failing to attend more than three

consecutive meetings and/or not responding to emails or messages), it will be assumed that the youth has declined further participation in the Council.

APPENDIX

Friday Court Cheat Sheet

-prepared by Judge Nystrom-Geist, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Delinquency

OVERVIEW

- Friday Court is a collaborative court designed for delinquency and dependency youth who have been, or are at risk of being, trafficked. (Currently [3-2019], only delinquency youth are participating.)
- The purpose of the calendar is to assist the youth in recovery and resilience by focusing on the youth's goals. Each youth's self-identified goals should be in an envelope on the left-hand side of their file. The judge can pull the goal sheet out during the hearing to talk with the youth about the progress that she is making. (The calendar is open to all genders and orientations, but there are currently only girls participating.)
- While participation in the calendar is limited to youth who have been, or are at risk of being, trafficked, that is not what we talk about in court. Discussions in court are always on their goals, the actions or decisions they are making that move them toward or away from their goals, and what services or assistance they might need. The girls are all informed that we will not be talking in court about any of the experiences they had while being trafficked—they talk about those experiences in the safety and confidentiality of sessions with their treatment team.
- It is called Friday Court in an effort to avoid placing any labels on the participants or their circumstances. They have generally been labeled by others, and our focus is on assisting them to pursue their own identity and define themselves as positive individuals.

BEFORE THE HEARING

- A staffing will have taken place on a separate date and time before Friday Court. The judge does not participate in the staffing because law enforcement may participate and some of the youth have complicated relationships and/or history with each other. The absence of the judge is intended to allow a freer exchange of information between Probation, DSS, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office and defense attorney.
- The judge will usually receive two brief reports. One will be from Probation, and the other will be a summary of the staffing prepared by the Court Coordinator (Brenda Lane). At the bottom of the report prepared by Brenda, there will be a paragraph that synthesizes the recommendation of the staffing for that particular youth.

AT THE HEARING

- Judge calls the case and asks for appearances. Attorneys, the judge and Probation refer to the youth by name, and not by a label such as "the minor."
- In-custody youth are called beginning at 10:00; out-of-custody youth are called at 1:30. Cases are confidential and are called one at a time.
- Out-of-custody youth can have a parent or support person sit with them in addition to their attorney. In-custody youth who are promoting or being recognized can have a parent with them if they want (subject to the Deputy's approval if there are safety concerns).
- Ask the youth's attorney for any updates or information the attorney might like to provide.

- Ask for comments by Probation, followed by the People, and then see if the child's attorney wants to add anything. Judge makes comments, gives the youth their next court date, and then offers the youth the opportunity to add her thoughts as the last words of the hearing.
- The hearings are meant to be fairly relaxed, very encouraging, and to be a positive experience for the youth. There are three stages to Friday Court, and youth promote (never demote) from stage to stage. If it's time for promotion or graduation, the team can help the judge before the case is called so that the judge is more familiar with the particular youth and the incentive given.
- Even so, there may be times when a youth is arraigned on a VOP or new charge. In terms of process, those go the same as any other juvenile case. The attorney might want to waive time so that the VOP or new charge stays on Friday Court days, and that's fine.

CSEC Case Management Helpful Practices

Below is a list of case management and/or mentorship practices that the Friday Court team has found to be helpful when working with victims of human trafficking. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, and was created as a tool to assist other agencies and/or professionals in working with this population.

- Allow the youth to write in their journal if something is too painful and/or embarrassing to talk about. Give the youth the options of having their advocate respond to the journal entry, or just read it if the youth is not ready to discuss it yet.
- Use 'uno cards' during sessions with youth—this distracts the youth from the intensity of the subject matter and allows them to let down their guard. This has been found to be especially helpful for the initial assessment
- Focus on establishing and building rapport with the youth during the initial meeting by asking simple questions (i.e. their favorite color, subject in school, etc) and getting to know them.
- Use coloring activities or other art supplies during sessions with the youth
- Incorporate moving activities with the youth (i.e. taking a walk, driving, etc)
- Provide youth with disposable cameras to capture meaningful moments, develop the pictures, and use these pictures in a vision board and/or other activities to focus on strengths and positive aspects of making progress.