

2017-2018

Evaluation Plan for New Day Youth and Family Services

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MAKING POSITIVE POSSIBLE.



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1. Introduction

New Day Youth and Family Services assists homeless and runaway youth through a homeless and runaway youth safe home, a Life Skills Academy, a young adult living transitional program, and detention diversion program for youth. Since its inception, New Day has remained singularly focused on meeting the needs of young people in trouble.

2. Purpose of Evaluation

The overarching purpose of this evaluation is to help New Day develop its evaluation capacity. Last year the Evaluation Lab assessed the implementation of the Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) at the safe home by conducting three separate focus groups with youth at the safe home, staff of the safe home, and New Day leadership. In the youth focus group, participants indicated that they were developing “Inner Wealth” through statements surrounding emotional intelligence and the pride in their greatness cards given to them by New Day staff. In the staff and leadership focus groups, participants were enthusiastic about the NHA and cited that benefits from the approach could be seen in their interactions with youth at the safe home, as well as their interactions with outside agencies and other staff members.

This year’s evaluation will implement a survey to assess whether youth are developing inner wealth while at the safe home.

3. Logic Model

The logic model created for New Day last year was briefly reviewed by the current evaluation team and kept in its entirety to guide the current evaluation (see figure 1). The logic model was developed with the three primary groups at the safe home in mind. Each group has their own specific goals or needs; whether that is developing inner wealth for the youth, or New Day administration providing adequate training and education for safe home staff members in the Nurtured Heart Approach.

The Nurtured Heart Approach is a relationship-focused methodology that is based on three stands when interacting with intense, or difficult youth. These stands include: Absolutely No! (to energizing negative behavior), Absolutely Yes! (to actively acknowledging positive behavior and greatness), and Absolutely Clear! (rules are clear and consistent). While the Nurtured Heart Approach is incorporated throughout the below logic model, it is most notably included in the activities section for youth needs and their “greatness cards”. Greatness cards were implemented by New Day last year as a way to give youth a tangible iteration of stand two, Absolutely Yes. Greatness cards are index cards that are filled out daily by New Day staff that recognize each youth’s specific actions throughout the day that showed helpfulness, respect, self-control and other positive behaviors.

While there is not a large base of existing research on the Nurtured Heart Approach, each of the stands of the approach does find support in the literature. Stand one is supported by research on the determinants of runaway episodes. This research found that youth who felt neglected by their parents, or were abused by their parents or other family members, were more likely to run away than those who did not express those feelings (Thompson & Pillai 2006). Stand two finds support in the field of “positive parenting”, which is generally defined as parenting focused on developing relationships between parents and children based on communication and respect. Cassidy *et al.* (2011) find that parenting approaches make a difference for infants identified as highly irritable, who are likely to be the intense children for whom the Nurtured Heart Approach is designed. Research conducted on parent rulemaking in the Netherlands supports stand three; in this research it was shown that clear, strict rules resulted in less risky adolescent behavior than lax or vague rules (Looze *et al.* 2012).

One empirical study of the Nurtured Heart Approach did find that participants practicing the approach had increased parenting confidence, more positive views of their children, and were better able to control their own emotions (Brennan *et al* 2016). This study does suffer from some research design limitations. See the appendix for details.

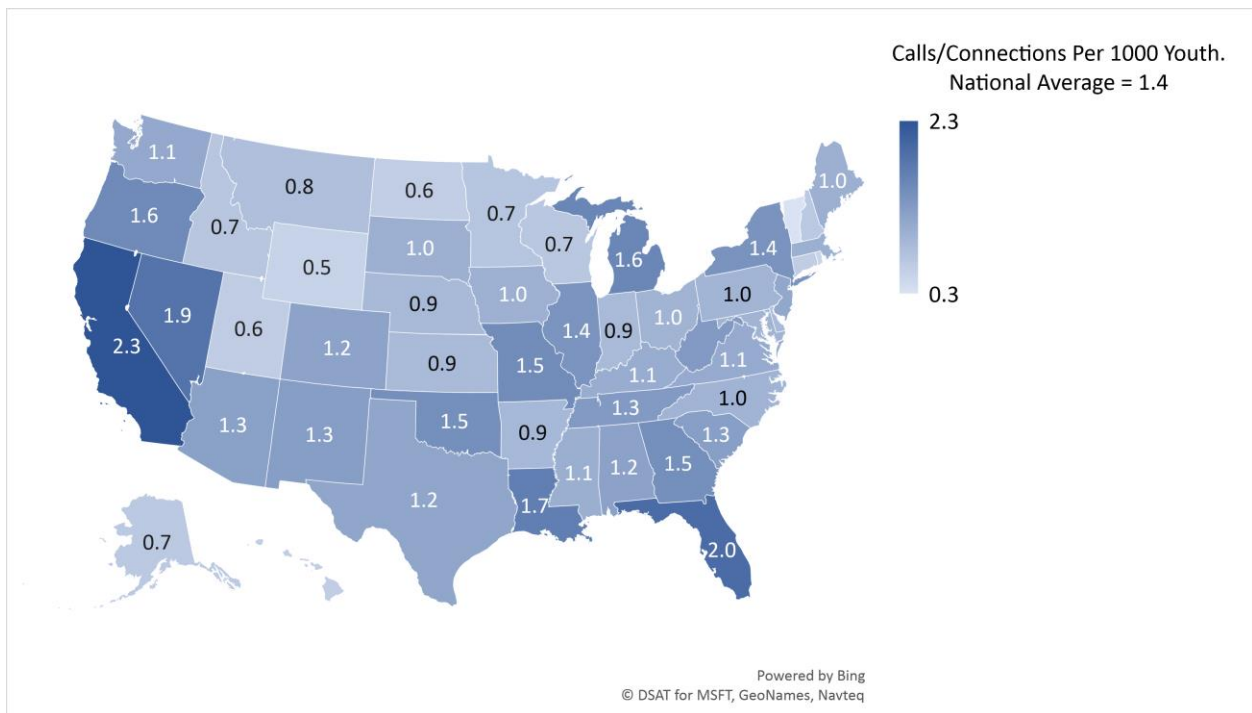
Figure 1. Logic Model for the Nurtured Heart Approach at New Day Youth and Family Services' Safe Home

Goals	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>Youth Needs: Development of tools measuring 'Inner Wealth' social and emotional intelligence.</p>	<p>Trained employees, psychologists and social workers. CYFD funding as well as grant money.</p>	<p>- Intake, interim, and discharge surveys measuring Inner Wealth. - Positive reinforcement and greatness cards.</p>	<p>For all: Record keeping that includes number of transition emails between staff, attendance of staff and leadership team at meetings, and youth check-ins, which is the communication between staff regarding the youth.</p>	<p>- Youths build and increase inner wealth.</p>
<p>Staff Needs: - Maintaining staff values and knowledge regarding approach - To ensure there is enough training and support for staff - Leadership team maintains values, knowledge and training with NHA</p>	<p>Employee trainings, CYFD funding, leadership team</p>	<p>- Team meetings, communication activities (EOS, team email, crossovers).</p>	<p>-Results of inner wealth surveys -Quality record keeping -Consistent record keeping (Apricot implementation)</p>	<p>- Leadership team is knowledgeable and actively uses NHA with staff. - Staff is knowledgeable and actively uses NHA with youth. -Build and maintain NHA outcomes</p>
<p>Shelter Needs: Understand perspectives of everyone working/living in safe home.</p>	<p>UNM Evaluation Lab</p>	<p>-Youth centered meetings -Focus groups with leadership team, staff, and youth</p>	<p>Results from focus groups</p>	<p>- Providing youth with tools for Inner Wealth even when they leave New Day</p>

4. Context

Homeless and runaway youth have few resources for support while on the streets. One organization that youth often turn to is the National Runaway Safeline. The safeline provides support and guidance for youth ranging in age from under 12 years old to 21 years old who are in trouble, currently on the run, or are just contemplating running away. Calls and connections (as well as emails, texts, and other forms of communication) made to the safeline are logged by state and zip code, and reported on the National Runaway Safeline’s website. This data shows the regional differences in the number of youth who are seeking support from the safeline. Across the country in 2016 there were almost 1.4 calls made per 1000 youth, while in New Mexico for that same year we were slightly lower at 1.3 calls made per 1000 youth. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Calls/Connections Made Per 1000 Youth to 1-800-Runaway in 2016



Source: National Runaway Safeline, <https://www.1800runaway.org/runaway-statistics/crisis-hotline-online-services-statistics/>. U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates for number of youth ages 12-21 per state https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/download_center.xhtml#none

During these calls/connections the National Runaway Safeline team are not only guiding youth to local resources for support, but they are also working to identify the underlying issues that made the youth contact them in the first place. These issues are then aggregated into common categories and reported on the organization’s website for the United States as a whole. Family dynamics (reported in 35% of cases), peer/social issues (10%), emotional/verbal abuse (10%), mental health (8%), economics (5%), and

school/education issues (5%) are some of the most common problems that these youth face. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Frequency of Underlying Youth Issues Identified by National Runaway Safeline

Family Dynamics	35%
Peer/Social Issues	10%
Emotional/Verbal Abuse	10%
Mental Health	8%
Physical Abuse/Assault	7%
Economics	5%
School/Education	5%
Neglect	4%
Transportation	3%
Alcohol/Drug Use	3%
Youth/Family Services	3%
Health	2%
Judicial System	2%
GLBTQ	1%
Sexual Abuse/Assault	1%
Exploitations/Trafficking	>1%
Total	100%

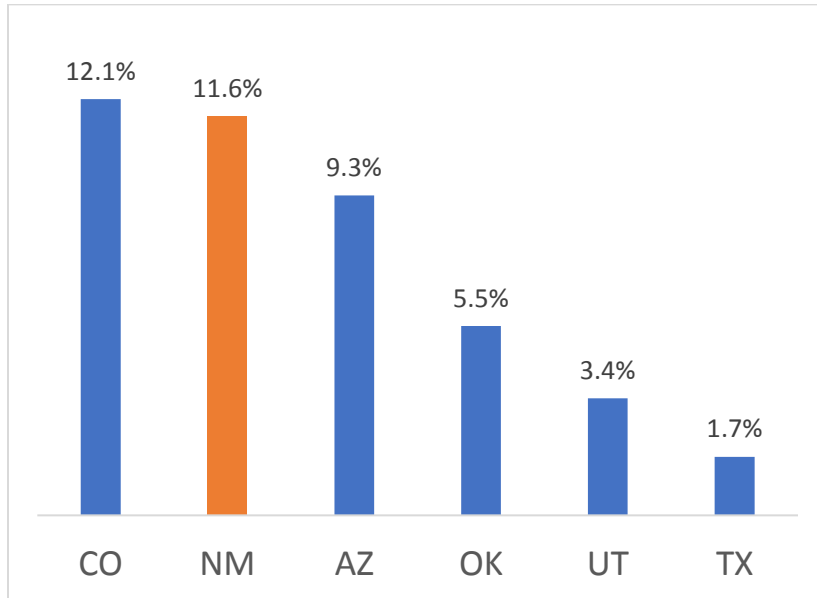
Source: National Runaway Safeline, <https://www.1800runaway.org/runaway-statistics/crisis-hotline-online-services-statistics/>

School/education issues can have long-term implications, and the population that New Day serves is particularly susceptible to dropping out of high school. This fact is shown through data provided by the Family Youth and Services Bureau (FYSB). FYSB is a group within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services tasked with ending youth homelessness, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic violence. The FYSB provides funding to organizations to tackle these programs locally, and then collects data and

feedback from these organizations. This data is aggregated by state, and reported in the “National Extranet Optimized Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System” or NEO-RHYMIS. New Day, and other organizations funded by FYSB with similar programs, are classified as basic center programs in this database. While not all safe homes or similar youth programs are funded by the FYSB, there is no reason to believe that the populations of youth the unfunded programs serve are systematically different than those of FYSB funded programs.

For the most recent data years 2013-2014, New Mexico regionally had one of the highest reported percentages of youth who had entered basic center programs and had already dropped out of high school at almost 12% of youth (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Youth Enrolled in Basic Center Program Who Had Dropped out of High School at Admittance, 2013-2014



Source: Family Youth and Services Bureau, NEO-RHYMIS

https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/custom_reports.jsp

5. Evaluation Team and Other Stakeholders

UNM Evaluation Team Members:

- Rebecca Rae, Team Lead, Associate Scientist III College of Population Health, Center for Participatory Research
- Sofia Locklear, Senior Fellow, UNM Health Policy Fellow, PhD Student-Sociology
- Kevin Estes, Fellow, PhD Student-Economics

New Day Evaluation Team Members:

- Brooke Tafoya, Director of Operations
- Maureen Schat, Safe Home Program Manager

Other Stakeholders:

- Steve Johnson, New Day Executive Director
- New Day Staff
- New Day Safe Home Youth

6. Evaluation Activities and Timeline

UNM and New Day Evaluation Team members developed a 15-question survey to implement on the youth at the safe home (see figure 4). New Day staff will give the survey as a pretest within three days of intake to coincide with other intake paperwork. The same survey will then be administered at 30 days (posttest) and 60 days (post-posttest) for those still at New Day, or otherwise at the youth's discharge.

The survey questions will measure overall emotional health, understanding of NHA concepts, and exposure to NHA stands while at New Day. Each of the fifteen questions addresses one of these ideas. For example, questions one through five each address concepts of emotional health. Goalmaking, self confidence, and the ability to control emotions are all indicators of good emotional health.

Questions six through fifteen address the concept of the Nurtured Heart Approach and the youth's exposure to it. For example, questions seven and nine directly address the second stand of the approach (Absolutely yes to acknowledging the greatness in others). While questions six and twelve each correspond to ideas from stand one (absolutely no to energizing negative behavior).

Exposure to the Nurtured Heart Approach will be determined by youth responses to questions that directly contain Nurtured Heart Approach terminology, such as question thirteen, which asks whether youth "can easily help others see their greatness." When youth first complete the survey, answers to question thirteen should be neutral considering that youth have not yet been exposed to the NHA. When the youth completes the survey at discharge, or after 30 days at the safe home, they should be able to easily acknowledge the greatness in others (after exposure to the NHA) and answer in the affirmative. If there is no statistically significant change in youth responses to this question after staying at the safe home, then this would indicate further review needs to be done on how the Nurtured Heart Approach is being implemented at the safe home.

Figure 4. Inner Wealth Survey

1. Fill in one word to describe yourself _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. I have personal goals							
3. I feel good about myself							
4. When I get angry, I act without thinking							
5. People at my home care about my feelings							
6. People pay more attention when I mess up then when I don't.							
7. I feel recognized for my successes							
8. Expectations at New Day are clear to me							
9. New Day staff acknowledges my greatness regularly							
10. I feel like I am part of a group							
11. People at New Day care about my feelings							
12. I know how to reset myself							
13. I can easily help others see their greatness							
14. I feel capable of making positive change							

15. I can name three of my strengths:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

After the implementation of the survey the evaluation team will develop a protocol for data transfer of completed pre, post, and post-posttests surveys to the UNM group. Once the surveys have been collected the UNM group will conduct simple statistical summary analysis, t-test analysis, and regression analysis to determine if the youth are developing inner wealth at the safe home. The regression analysis could use a composite score determined from answers to the survey, with regressors such as age, gender, the amount of time spent at safe home, status at discharge, if the youth ran away before discharge, and referring agency/situation. Based on the survey data results, the evaluation team may interview staff to discuss any anomalies or other items of interests that they could provide clarity on.

Timeline:

January 2018 – Survey administered by New Day (within three days of intake) for all new youth (except couching youth). Develop data transfer protocol.

February 2018 – Analysis of all pretests collected during January intakes. Begin collecting 30-day and discharge posttest-surveys.

March 2018 – Analysis of first completed pre & posttest-surveys and implement 60-day post-posttest survey. Based on pre & posttest results, determine if staff interviews/focus groups are needed to clarify survey results.

April 2018 – Anticipate collecting 60-80 pre, post, and post-posttest surveys and run final data analysis. First complete draft due to New Day on April 13, 2018.

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Appendix: Literature Review

The goal of this evaluation is to measure whether youth who stay at the New Day safe home develop “Inner Wealth”. Inner wealth is described as belief in one’s self that has been developed through consistent experiences of success and value (Glasser & Lowenstein 2016). Inner wealth can be developed through exposure to the Nurtured Heart Approach. Howard Glasser, who was a self-described intense child, developed the Nurtured Heart Approach after years of experience as a psychoanalyst. During this time Glasser found that standard practices failed intense children.

The Nurtured Heart Approach is built around three primary stands. The first stand is “Absolutely No”. Absolutely No refers to the refusal to further energize negative behaviors. Throughout Glasser’s writings there are many examples of possible ways that parents further energize negative behaviors; such as yelling at a child after the child talks back, using sarcasm, or even extreme examples such as physical or mental abuse. The second stand of the Nurtured Heart Approach is “Absolutely Yes”; meaning yes to building greatness in others using positivity. The second stand implores users of the Nurtured Heart Approach to identify and acknowledge the greatness in others. Specifically, this stand pushes users of the Nurtured Heart Approach to acknowledge when things are going right for youth. An example of this stand is praising a child for controlling their emotions in a tough situation. The final stand of the Nurtured Heart Approach is “Absolutely Clear”. Absolutely clear means that you are clear with the rules that are set for children. There can be no gray areas. For example, a rule cannot be “be nice to your sister”, since there is a lot of gray area on what is and what is not being nice. A better rule would be, “do not hit your sister” or “don’t take your sister’s toys”. These two examples are clear, and it is obvious to the child and to the parent when these two rules have been broken.

Although the Nurtured Heart Approach makes sense, and New Day and other organizations have reported dramatic improvements in youth behavior, to date there have been no rigorous studies that establish effectiveness. A literature search turned up several studies that relate to the three Nurtured Heart Approach stands, and one non-randomized study suggests that parents who take a Nurtured Heart Approach class report that they have better interactions with their children.

Research conducted by Thompson and Pillai in 2006 support the theory behind the first stand of the NHA. Thompson and Pillai used data on 350 youth from two different crisis shelters in Texas and New York to try to find the determinants of runaway episodes among adolescents. Employing a negative binomial regression analysis, they found that youth who felt neglected by their parents or had answered yes to a question indicating if they had ever experienced physical abuse from their parents or other family members, were more likely to run away than those who did not express those feelings (Thompson & Pillai 2006).

Research into “positive parenting” is supportive of the strategies advocated by stand two of the NHA. Positive parenting focuses on developing strong, committed relationships between parents and children based on communication and respect. Pastorelli *et al* (2016) investigated positive parenting and the relationship it has with pro-social behaviors by the children later in life. Pro-social behaviors are intended to benefit others; examples

are helping and sharing. The authors surveyed 1105 mother-child dyads in eight countries (Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States) over a two-year period through a convenience sample of 9-year-olds in primary schools chosen for economic and cultural diversity. Children whose parents consented to their participation in the study responded to a survey about their parents' disciplinary practices, and about their own pro-social behavior. Parents also completed a survey about their children's pro-social behavior. Children and parents then completed the same surveys again a year later. The study found a peculiar association between pro-social behavior at age 9 and positive parenting at age 10, suggesting that pro-social children induce positive parenting. There was no relationship between positive parenting at age 9 and pro-social behavior at age 10. It is possible that the timeframe was too short to establish an association between parenting and children's pro-social behavior. It is also possible that parenting style is determinative only for especially vulnerable children. For example, Cassidy *et al.* (2011) find that parenting approaches make a difference for infants identified as highly irritable, but not for infants who were less irritable.

The third stand of the NHA is supported by research conducted in the Netherlands looking at the relationship between parent rulemaking and adolescent smoking and drinking. Using responses from 5,462 adolescents on the Dutch Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey, adolescents reported whether their parents had expectations related to drinking and smoking, such as not being allowed to do either or being allowed to try smoking or drink one alcoholic beverage while outside of the home. These questions were then followed with further questions that would clarify the parents' rules more, such a follow-up might be "my parents allow me to drink on the weekends". Those who answered those escalating questions positively, meaning that their parents allowed more risky behaviors were more likely to report binge drinking and smoking. Furthermore, these same adolescents who had less strict rules for drinking and smoking also reported higher sexual activity compared with adolescents who had more strict rules and clearer expectations (Looze *et al.* 2012).

The importance of stand three's clear rules is also supported by a qualitative study of youth who had received shelter services from two runaway/homeless youth shelters located in Missouri and Kansas (Nebbitt *et al.* 2007). One quote from an interviewed youth highlighted in the article mentioned the fact that through structure (clear rules), the youth realized "you don't have to be in trouble to be noticed" (551).

One empirical study examines the benefits parents receive from implementing the Nurtured Heart Approach in their households. This study looked at a non-randomized group of 326 parents from a mid-sized Midwestern city who signed up for a five-week course on the Nurtured Heart Approach. Parents paid a course fee of \$50 for individuals and \$60 for couples. This group was then compared with 92 parents from the same community recruited via advertisements in the local newspaper and school newsletters. These parents received a nine-page document outlining the concepts of the Nurtured Heart Approach and were compensated for their participation with a \$20 gift card to a local discount store. Study participants in both groups completed surveys before exposure to the Nurtured Heart Approach and five weeks later.

The study found improvements in the treatment group in almost all areas of parenting, including controlling their own emotions, increased parenting confidence, and more

positive views of their children (Brennan et al 2016). Since the treatment group was self-selected though, the overall effects of the program could be over-stated for the general population. Self-selection means that these parents were seeking help in building better relationships with their children, while the control group would be more representative of the general population and potentially just responding to the financial incentive offered for their completion of the surveys.

The vulnerability of the population of youth that New Day serves strengthens the argument for implementing a program that could potentially confer long-lasting benefits. Many of the youth at New Day have a history in the “system”, which can mean any past interactions with Child Protective Services or juvenile justice. Liberman *et al.* (2014) used longitudinal survey data from the Project on Human development in Chicago Neighborhoods, coupled with official arrest records, to test whether those involved with the system faced harsher treatment than those who were suspected of similar crimes, but who had no prior system involvement. Researchers concluded that once youth are labeled as system-involved they are treated differently from those without involvement. This different treatment is shown by harsher punishments handed down through the courts for the same crime committed as a first-time offender, and an increased likelihood to be arrested for the same crime that would not result in an arrest for a first-time offender.

In a study of eleven shelters in four midwestern states, researchers used a pre-post survey design to see if youth experienced improvements in a number of outcomes after receiving shelter services. The total sample of runaway and homeless youth consisted of 368 participants who completed intake interviews, then of these 368 participants 261 completed 6-week followup interviews. From these surveys researchers found significant improvements in multiple outcomes for these youths including: a decrease in the number of days on the run, a decrease in school detention, and a decrease in sexual activity (Thompson *et al.* 2002).

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