



Good Shepherd Services' Programs Show Widespread Impact on Social-Emotional Learning (March 2016)

Good Shepherd's Youth and Family Development Approach

A leading multi-service agency in New York City, Good Shepherd Services operates over 80 programs in neighborhoods where children, youth and families face the greatest challenges and provides them with the support they need to succeed. As a framework for all Good Shepherd programs, its strength-based and evidence-informed Youth and Family Development (YFD) approach builds on existing competencies, while helping participants to gain developmental skills for success. In addition to fostering "hard" skills among young people, Good Shepherd cultivates social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies – values, beliefs, attitudes, characteristics and dispositions, independent of intellectual ability – that have been associated in research with long-term outcomes of academic performance and employability.^{1,2} Within neighborhoods stressed by poverty, where schools are often unable to provide the necessary balance of academic, emotional and social support, Good Shepherd fills the gaps with targeted, high-quality programs that equip young people with the SEL skills they need to prosper in the present and into adulthood.



Fostering Social-Emotional Learning Skills at Good Shepherd

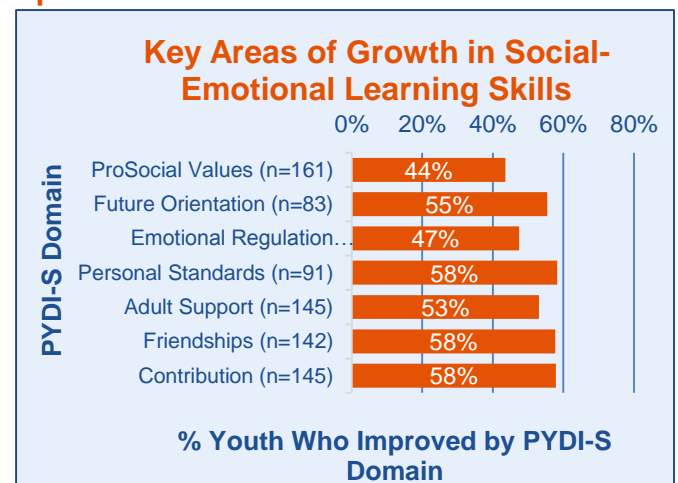
In 2015, nine of Good Shepherd's school-based programs administered the Positive Youth Development Inventory-Short (PYDI-S)³ pre- and post- surveys to measure the impact of their services on SEL skills development. They were:

- **High school afterschool programs** at Bushwick, Automotive and Boys and Girls high schools. In addition to academic advisement, these programs provide services such as individual and group counseling, family engagement, mentoring and community service opportunities to provide participants with the support they need along their path to high school graduation.
- **Middle school afterschool programs** at IS 292, Essence, Madiba Prep, Spring Creek, and Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter schools. These programs provide services such as arts enrichment, team and community-building activities, and health and fitness activities to create a safe, engaging and inclusive afterschool community that empowers youth with a sense of belonging, skill mastery and leadership.
- **Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) program** at Monroe High School. In addition to tutoring and academic advisement, the YABC provides services such as individual and group counseling, career development opportunities through Learning To Work (LTW) internships, and college advisement to help over-age and under-credited youth (ages 17-21) develop the skills they need to successfully graduate from high school and transition into adulthood.

Impact on Social-Emotional Learning Skills Development

The PYDI-S survey was designed to assess growth in seven SEL construct areas – pro-social values, future orientation, emotional regulation, personal standards, adult support, friendships and contribution. The survey includes 34 questions, each measured on a four-point Likert scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 (strongly agree"). **Improvement in each of the seven construct areas was widespread across programs, with the greatest percentage of youth (58%) reporting growth in personal standards, friendship and contribution.**

Gains in average scores in all domains of the survey were statistically significant. Only participants with an identified need for significant growth in SEL competencies (as indicated by an average baseline score of less than 3.33 for a construct) were included in the analysis.



Implications and Next Steps

The widespread improvement across domains has promising implications, not only for the nine school programs that administered the survey in 2015, but also for Good Shepherd's overarching YFD approach. In accordance with the approach, Good Shepherd fosters SEL competencies across all program areas. In 2016, five of Good Shepherd's community-based youth justice programs are administering the pre-post PYDI-S survey, in addition to school programs.

Good Shepherd considers itself to be a learning agency with a deep commitment to continuously strengthening its services. We engage staff at all levels, as well as participants, in conversations to learn from internal data and, in consultation with empirical evidence, inform program modifications. Ongoing conversations will focus on survey results as well as the PYDI-S measurement tool itself, to ensure that the survey is most appropriate given the distinct and changing needs of participants. With a tailored focus on each program's population and the competencies it seeks to most powerfully impact, alternate validated surveys and survey scales are administered across Good Shepherd programs to measure other competencies, like growth mindset, that have been associated with long-term success.⁴

“It’s beyond a program. It’s like a family. We look after each other and want to see each other succeed.”

-Afterschool Participant, Boys and Girls High School

Positive Youth Development Inventory-Short (PYDI-S)

The PYDI-S is a 34-question tool designed to measure changes in levels of positive youth development. The seven constructs measured by the tool with sample questions are:

- **Pro-Social Values:** Desire to act in a way that benefits other people or society as a whole (“I am aware of other people’s needs in social situations”).
- **Future Orientation:** Ability to set goals, monitor progress towards achievement, and be optimistic about his/her future (“I have goals for my life”).
- **Emotional Regulation:** Ability to identify and discriminate emotions (“I can handle being disappointed”).
- **Personal Standards:** Propensity to be responsible to others, hard-working, self-controlled and rule-abiding (“It is important for me to do the right thing”).
- **Adult Support:** Degree to which he/she has caring adults in- or outside of family (“I have adults in my life who are interested in me”).
- **Friendships:** Degree to which he/she has healthy, supportive relationships with peers (“I have a wide circle of friends”).
- **Contribution:** Degree to which he/she uses his/her own attributes and talents to give to family, community and civil society (“I have things I can offer to others”).

Methodology: Programs administered the pre-test at or near the start of services and again at the end of the program term or year. The pre-post analysis contains only those youth who took a pre- and post-test, which totaled 280 youth. The data was further refined by eliminating surveys with significant missing responses, outliers within each scale, and instances where respondents answered the same way across all 34 questions (e.g., all 4's). Furthermore, youth who reported scores above 3.33 out of 4 on a given scale on the pre-test were removed from the analysis for that specific construct. The analysis was completed by Good Shepherd Services' Program Evaluation and Planning department – a centralized department that works in conjunction with each Good Shepherd program to promote the use of data and empirical research to inform program planning for the continuous strengthening of services.

Citations:

1 Farrington et al. (2012). *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners: The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance: A Critical Literature Review*. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive%20Report.pdf>

2 Pellegrino and Hilton (2012). *Education for Work and Life: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century*. National Academy of Sciences.

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13398/education-for-life-and-work-developing-transferable-knowledge-and-skills>

3 Arnold, M.E., Nott, B. D., & Meinhold, J. L. (2012). *The Positive Youth Development Inventory*. Oregon State University.

<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/positive-youth-development-inventory-pydi>

4 Yeager and Walton (2011). Social-Psychological Interventions in Education: They're Not Magic. *Review of Educational Research* 81 (2), 267-301.

<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/81/2/267>

Good Shepherd Services is a leading multi-service organization in New York City that operates over 80 programs in neighborhoods where children, youth and families face the greatest challenges to provide the support they need to succeed. To learn more about Good Shepherd Services, please visit www.goodshepherds.org. This report was written by the Program Evaluation and Planning Department at Good Shepherd Services.