Course Focus

Effective juvenile justice ministry must include the essential and very challenging component of aftercare. Much of this course will be conducted on the site of Straight Ahead Ministries’ Community Outreach Center in Lynn, MA. Students will experience the trenches of urban ministry with high-risk gang youth, and learn first hand several effective models of collaboration with juvenile justice agencies, police, city officials and funding agencies.

Literature on Resiliency and asset building for youth and the communities that surround them will be examined. Students will develop their own aftercare models as part of the course, after experiencing several active programs of evangelism and discipleship, in the context of community outreach, mentoring, case management, job training, educational services, court and family advocacy. Students will learn effective case management and evaluation models useful for data collection, funding proposals, and enhancing ministry effectiveness.

Models of residential aftercare, discipleship homes, community-based aftercare, mentoring, youth aftercare churches, community service, and community collaboration will be delved into in detail.

Course Objectives

As a result of this course students will…

1. Be familiar with several innovative theories and models of juvenile justice aftercare ministry.

2. Assess the needs and develop aftercare strategies and models and integrate them into a ministry contexts.
3. Understand various mentoring models and their usefulness in differing ministry contexts.

4. Understand resiliency research and asset building strategies for youth and the communities that surround them.

5. Develop an inventory of agencies that interface with juvenile offenders in the community, and understand issues that impact effective collaboration.

6. Be able to identify assets in a given community and how to effectively integrate them into effective aftercare while addressing the outstanding needs.

7. Understand the Logic Model for Quantitative Outcomes Evaluation of programs and be able to set up a system of evaluation for one’s own programs.

8. Become familiar with various systems of case management and be able to set up a similar system within one’s own program.

Course Format and Structure

This seven-week course with a 5-day intensive is designed to enable students to develop an aftercare ministry model for work with incarcerated youth. Participants will experience various models from within a direct ministry context. Teaching methods will include lecture, interactive classroom discussions, running focus groups, video presentations, interviews with youth and social serving agency staff, small group and individual projects, reading & reflective assignments, and journaling.

Assignments

There will be pre-intensive assignments and post-intensive assignments for students to complete as well as short assignments to be completed during the residency course. Three book reviews will be required on reading texts. There will be one major final project due at the end of the course. Students will also be graded on class attendance and participation. Specific pre- and post-intensive written assignment include:

Pre-Intensive Assignments:

1. Conduct a Needs Assessment Survey in your local community. Interview at least two youth and two professionals working in the juvenile justice system, asking them what they see as the greatest needs in aftercare in your community. Write 3-5 pages detailing all that they say.
2. Write 2-4 pages detailing attempts you or your ministry has made in the past at following up on people coming out of juvenile institutions. Discuss what worked, what failed, and what you learned.

Post-Intensive Assignments:

1. Using the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets Survey, (can be downloaded at [http://www.search-institute.org/downloads/#40assets](http://www.search-institute.org/downloads/#40assets) or found in back of Reclaiming Our Prodigal Sons and Daughters book), conduct a survey of what you (with the help of your staff if applicable) see as the greatest needs with youth you are serving in your community. Give each of the 40 assets a score of 1-5. Write 4-6 pages detailing your conclusions.

2. Develop a Logic Model Quantitative Outcomes Evaluation tool for measuring outcomes in your specific ministry based on the one learned in this course.

3. Develop a workable case management tool for your program to track the type and frequency of interactions of staff and volunteers with youth in your program based on the one learned in this course.

4. Administer QuickConnect Assessment on 3 youth you’re working with and write up a service plan based upon the results.

5. Complete the three book reviews, 3-5 pages each (choose either Seek the Peace of the City or Risk in our Midst, depending upon your ministry context), connecting the material in the book specifically to your own work with at risk youth. Discuss how you will apply the learning you derived from the book to your own individual ministry context.

6. Final Project: Develop an extensive 12-14 page aftercare ministry plan for your program that encompasses: collaboration, specific components offered, staffing, funding and evaluation.

Grading:

Pre- and post-intensive assignments will make up 40% of grade; book reports 25%; 5-day intensive assignments and participation 10%; Final project 25%.

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**Reading Requirements**

**Required texts:**


**Required article:**


**Additional suggested reading and Bibliography:**


Basil Entwhistle, *Making Cities Work: How Two People Mobilized a Community To*
Class Schedule

1. Community-based Re-entry Models

This session will examine several best practice and proven models of community-based re-entry with juvenile offenders. Models of residential aftercare, discipleship homes, community-based aftercare, mentoring, youth aftercare churches, community service, and community collaboration will be delved into in detail.

2. Collaboration

Working with juvenile offenders requires working with the myriad of other individuals and agencies that interface with juvenile offenders. These youth are
“wards of the state” and are entrusted to its care. Collaboration is not a necessary evil, but rather a skill that can yield significant fruit, as the issues facing young offenders are very complex and unless ministries work together the impact is fractured. Working with juvenile justice agencies, police, city officials, churches, schools, job training programs and funding agencies will be examined.

3. Juvenile Justice Minister as a Case Manager

Evangelism and discipleship with juvenile offenders who are re-entering communities, goes far beyond the typical church youth worker model. The need for job training, educational services, court and family advocacy, mentoring, counseling, drug and alcohol services, and collaboration all demand that the juvenile justice minister be versed as a case manager. Rather than being a burden, a properly designed and operated program allows juvenile justice ministers to become far more effective in supporting the youth they are called to serve. Students will learn several models and design their own as a result.

4. Ministry Effectiveness Evaluation

Ministries have traditionally not measured outcomes, in favor of trusting God with the results. While it sounds noble at first, Scripture speaks a great deal about producing fruit and the need to be wise and diligent in our efforts. The Logic Model of Outcome Evaluation will be examined and students will develop their own models useful for data collection, funding proposals, and enhancing ministry effectiveness.

5. Developing an Effective Community-based Aftercare Model

Setting up an effective ministry to reach troubled youth encompasses many aspects such as: staffing, establishing a vision and mission, developing resources, and measuring outcomes. Students will develop their own aftercare models as part of the course, after experiencing several active models.