

4 Pillars of a Public Health Approach to Youth Success and Community Safety



“Systems actors must collaborate to serve youth across all institutions, including schools, health care, and delinquency and child welfare systems. A public health approach will help these systems work better together to improve public safety and help all youth thrive!”

— Kristin Henning, JD, LLM

Pillar 1

Cultivate Meaningful Relationships Between Youth and Adults

We improve youth outcomes by

- Creating space for youth to share their hopes and fears
- Listening with a genuine desire to serve
- Fostering trust (e.g., by following through on promises)
- Supporting and empowering parents and other allies to serve youth

Pillar 2

Responding with Trauma-Informed Practices

Recognizing that so many young people have experienced trauma, we must

- Learn about youth’s traumatic experiences (e.g., with family, poverty, loss, violence, law enforcement)
- Understand how trauma impacts youth behaviors
- Make trauma-informed decisions when engaging with youth
- Provide mental health and other services to help youth heal and thrive in adversity

Pillar 3

Restore and Heal Broken Relationships

We help youth heal and thrive when we

- Acknowledge that many youth have been harmed by institutions and systems' actors who should help them
- State our intention to earn their trust through open and honest dialogue
- Invite youth to hold us accountable when we have said or done something hurtful



Pillar 4

Commit to Fair Treatment of All Youth

We help **all** youth thrive by

- Understanding the key features of adolescence
- Recognizing that preconceptions often distort our views and responses to some youth and contribute to the criminalization of normal adolescent behaviors
- Remembering that youth who perceive systems as unfair are less likely to respond successfully to interventions
- Committing to treat all children like children



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Hear more about a public health approach to juvenile justice.

