

Positive Human Development

AT A GLANCE

Oregon Youth Authority | September 2022



The Developmental Approach

Positive youth development is a national, research-based model for working with youth. It emphasizes creating positive environments to help youth develop their natural talents in educational and vocational pursuits, as well as skills in emotional regulation, decision-making, and cooperation. Youth are encouraged to set high expectations for themselves and their peers.

When OYA adopted this model in 2014, the agency extended the same ideas to employees' interactions with each other. Thus, "Positive Human Development," or PHD, was born.

OYA leaders and staff work daily to create safe environments where caring and supportive relationships can thrive, where youth and staff are held accountable, where cultural differences are recognized and honored, and where everyone participates meaningfully in their community. Staff have learned to look beyond what a youth has done or what has happened to them, and instead to focus on nurturing youths' individual skills and talents.

Meeting People Where They Are

People develop best with accountability *and* support. Interactions that fall into the top right quadrant balance holding people accountable while also providing the support to meet them where they are. A major part of meeting people where they are includes taking into account different cultures, races, genders, and backgrounds.



SKILLS FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF DEVELOPMENT



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MISSION
OYA protects the public and reduces crime by holding youth accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

VISION
Youth who leave OYA go on to lead productive, crime-free lives.

VALUES
Integrity
Professionalism
Accountability
Respect

The PHD Pyramid



✱ **All levels of the pyramid** need youth, staff, and partners working together — with a solid agency infrastructure and positive physical environments supporting them — to achieve youth success.

>> What the Research Says

- **Therapeutic approaches** are more effective at reducing youth reoffending than punitive ones.
- **Adolescents have less capacity than adults** for self-regulation in emotionally charged situations, and are less able to consider the future impact of their judgments and decisions.
- **Experiencing traumatic events** can impact a child's brain — but the effects can be reversed with the right treatment, including stable relationships with a caring adult.

>> Recent Work at OYA

- **Case Management:** In 2021-22, OYA departments collaborated with youth and families to work toward diverse, equitable, inclusive, developmental, and trauma-informed case management.
- **Fundamental Practices in Facilities:** Over the past few years, OYA has implemented a "playbook" to help living units create PHD environments. OYA trained staff in these practices, and developed and launched a curriculum to teach youth about emotion regulation, problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- **Developmental Approach in Parole and Probation:** In 2020, OYA began training parole and probation staff in how to better incorporate this approach into their work.