Center for Translational Justice Research
VANDERBILT

SPEP™ Identification and Classification Guide

Interview, Pre and Post Visit Formats

- PARTNERSHIP – EDUCATION – TRANSPARENCY should be part of every aspect of the SPEP™ identification & classification process
- Remember this is NOT an audit – keep your tone relational and your language strengths-based during all communication exchanges
- Always have at least two (but usually no more than four) SPEPers at an onsite interview – *all SPEPers* should take notes

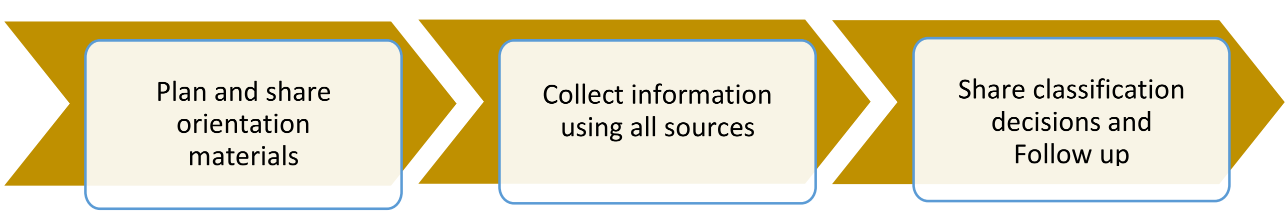
Pre Visit

- Identify an appropriate contact at the agency or facility at which you will be identifying and classifying services
    - Target someone in a supervisory role that understands the day-to-day functioning and services offered of the facility/agency/center (e.g., superintendent, program manager, treatment coordinator, quality assurance coordinator)
- Educate your contact(s)
    - Explain SPEP™ and what information you are interested in learning from them/their facility or agency
    - Review/talk them through the pre-visit checklist on pages 6-8 of this document (e.g., specific information needed, estimated time required, goals for the visit, suggested materials/persons that should be available for consult/questions, etc.)
    - Review/walk them through the anticipated process/requirements for your visit (e.g., meeting space, tour, etc. – see below)
- Scheduling
    - Be respectful of their time, security and scheduling concerns
    - Request a tour of the facility/program space(s)/service center (preferably conducted by a youth associated with the facility/agency) before you sit down to do a classification interview
    - Request a meeting/interview space at their facility (especially for residential facilities)
        - Use this to set up your laptop, speak with relevant program staff, review protocols, etc.
        - If available, use a projector or LCD screen in this room to project your service classification notes as you are taking them to promote transparency and engender partnership
    - Focus on conveying the informational goals of your visit when discussing time needed at facility/agency/center *but* rule of thumb estimates for time needed at facility/agency:
        - Tour
            - 30 min – 45 min for a tour at a medium to large community service provider location
            - 1 hour for a tour of a residential facility

        - Interview
            - 1 – 1.5 hours for a community service provider location
            - 4 - 6 hours (including a lunch break) for a large residential facility
    - *Do your homework* before you arrive at the service location – have a basic understanding of what the space looks like, who the program managers are, what they have traditionally offered youth in terms of services, number of youth typically served, sex/gender/age of youth served etc.
    - Arrive early (especially at secure sites because it takes longer to sign in, clear security etc.)

Visit Agenda

- Tour facility
    - This orients you to the service space and culture
    - While touring be sensitive to any milieu or all-encompassing behavioral management program(s) (especially at residential facilities)
    - If the tour conducted by a youth (preferred), ask him/her questions and conversationally engage about their program/service experiences at this service location
    - Focus on program spaces, bulletin boards and posted program materials – they can often tell you about what the youth are doing and what activities they are engaging in (service related and otherwise)
    - Ask your tour guide about what types of services are offered in the various spaces
    - Ask your tour leader about what the youth like the most/least about the facility/agency/center and its services
- Interview
    - Introductions
    - Educate
        - Introduce (or review depending on existing knowledge) SPEP™ and the performance improvement process
        - Be clear about how this impacts them, what your process is, and clearly articulate your visit goals (identification & classification)
        - It is generally useful to explain the SPEP™ distinction between a program and a service at this time as well
        - Describe the interactive classification process and how it will work in this specific context:



        - Explain clearly how the information they provide will be recorded, used, & maintained

        - Note that you will share the information recorded today with them for review/comment
        - Be clear when you convey the following: once you identify and classify the services, you will need dosage data (by youth) and quality data (by service)
            - It is often possible to discuss how these data are tracked and maintained as part of this visit – be ready to go into a higher level of detail about the specific data needed for SPEP™ quantity & quality measures if appropriate
    - Managing the interview and information gathering process:
        - Be gracious, respectful, and considerate of their time
        - *All* SPEPers present should take notes on everything that is said
        - *REMEMBER* as you ask questions about services delivered - *messaging and tone is important*
            - Maintain a positive tone
            - Let 'em brag! and celebrate their success – this could inform you about service initiatives and plans that would not otherwise be shared
            - Let 'em complain and vent about their challenges – this could help you to understand the service context and their challenges
            - Remind them (and yourselves) that you are not chiseling this information (and classification decisions) into stone . . . these conversations are part of an iterative process that the provider(s)/program manager(s) will be a part of
            - Be conversational – it's a conversation not an inquisition
            - Use strength-based language
            - Contextualization – why you are asking what you are asking and reiterate goals as needed
            - Acknowledge multi-party ownership of knowledge and process (partnership)
            - Use translative language to explain why what you are asking is relevant to SPEP™ and performance improvement (education)
            - Be mindful of clarity in your questions/discussion (transparency)
        - Confirm demographics of the youth and move service-by-service through their service array
        - *Keep your ears and eyes open* for services that are occurring that go beyond the commonly acknowledged service array – look out for homegrown services and/or modifications of name brand programs (*ASSUME NOTHING* about service content and the youth's service exposure & experience)
        - If you are at a residential facility, ask for a typical daily schedule and go through the schedule block by block, time period by time period
            - Start with "any services/programs ALL the kids get?"
            - *then . . .*
            - Unpack . . . within a "track" (especially if residential)
        - Ask probing, follow up questions for clarification and to increase understanding of each service content/experience

        - It is often useful to relate to the experience of individual juveniles
            - *"Okay, so if John Smith is in 'Anger Management 3' what does that look like? What does John receive exactly?"*
        - Incorporate info from tour/follow up questions
        - Ask for manuals when necessary to clarify content
        - Ask to speak to facilitators/teachers/therapists to clarify content
        - Pay attention to "name brand" services
            - Is the facilitator certified? What is the recency of the certification? (e.g., if they say they are doing ART, are they really closely following the ART curriculum to the letter or has the service drifted into a social skills service rather than developer standards regarding the three program components: social skills, moral reasoning, and anger management?)
        - If possible, record the names of developers, curriculum version numbers, and related program/service information
        - This is ultimately a qualitative process of gathering information and you are (Adapted from Robert Weiss, Learning from Strangers, 1994):
            - Developing detailed descriptions of programs and individual services (AKA unpacking)
            - Integrating multiple perspectives on service content, importance, youth experience
            - Describing process of service facilitation, referral, etc.
            - Developing holistic description of service events that youth actually receive
        - Remember the key questions you are answering:
            - What *exactly* are the kids getting?
            - What are the core service components – stripped of program names, catchy terminology, shiny manual covers and graphics
- Wrap up
    - Review your Full Program Profile or other document/format) and associated takeaways with provider
    - Share your plan of action
    - Reiterate the interactive classification process
    - Schedule a call to discuss (if not during visit – do so quickly after visit)

Post Visit

- Internal
    - SPEPers should debrief as close to the conclusion of the interview as possible so you can exchange and clarify information received while it is fresh in your minds.
    - Organize, clean up and compare notes with your colleague(s)
    - Assign initial classification categories individually and then
    - Compare with colleagues – discuss any discrepancies, reason through the classification decisions
    - Identify any remaining/clarifying questions that need to be answered in order to finalize service classification
    - Remember – don't force fit!

  - If any questions, issues or concerns arise with classification, do not hesitate to contract a certified SPEP™ trainer and/or Drs. Chapman or Lipsey for guidance and/or consultation
- External
  - Send a thank you email/note to the facility/agency/center contact and use this as an opportunity to reiterate your goals and your plan of action/next steps
  - Once you and your colleagues have finalized your Full Program Profile (or other document/format) with information on unpacked services (list these with descriptions) and preliminarily classifications into SPEP™ categories share them with the target provider for review/comment
  - Schedule a call to discuss classification decisions with the provider/program manager/contact (if call not scheduled during visit – do so quickly after visit)
    - Send provider/program manager your clarification questions and/or identify a specific service that you need more information on before the scheduled call
    - If needed, ask to speak to facilitators/teachers/therapists to clarify content during this call or
    - Request permission to observe a session of a service that is especially difficult to classify
  - Educate
    - Be very clear (transparent) about why you have chosen these SPEP™ categories and service types
    - Review your logic and reasoning – use this as an opportunity to educate about the SPEP™ Process
    - Utilize the SPEPable Service one-pager and SPEP™ Classification Guide as needed
    - Listen to the thoughts/opinions of the provider/program manager and respectfully respond
    - When in doubt about how to handle a classification disagreement contact a certified SPEP™ trainer and/or Drs. Chapman or Lipsey
  - Discuss any remaining classification issues, provider feedback, as well as any additional input/clarification with your SPEP™ colleagues and finalize your classification decisions
  - Finalize your Full Program Profile (or other document/format with the same information) classification categories
  - Once the item above is complete, share the document with the provider/program manager and
  - Clearly remind the provider of the SPEP™ Life Cycle:
    - You have completed the identification and clarification step
    - You will now need to collect data based on this information
      - dosage data (by youth) and
      - quality data (by service)

< SAMPLE EMAIL TEXT >

Good morning [contact],

We are looking forward to visiting [facility] on [date]. Thanks in advance for taking the time to meet with us. Our group will be made up of the following people on [date of visit]:

[NAMES of persons participating in shadowing/classification visit training]

To improve the programs and services we offer our youth in *** we are engaging in the SPEP™ process which allows us to *match our current service practices to research evidence for the purposes of program and performance excellence and optimization*. The first step of the SPEP™ process involves something called *service identification and classification*. This is precisely what we will be accomplishing with your help on [visit date]. In order to do this properly we need to do a “deep dive” into all the services that the youth receive at each facility. We are interested in finding out exactly what the youth are receiving – from standard, established programs to any innovative home-grown services and practices you have developed. Please know that this is not an audit or in any way meant to be a punitive visit – we want to optimize the services that the youth are receiving at all our facilities and to do this we need to first identify every service event/program the youth are experiencing in an effort to reduce re-offense(s) when they leave our facilities.

To familiarize you with the type of information we will need and make the best use of your time for this upcoming SPEP™ classification visit I have attached a *Pre-Visit Checklist* that summarizes the types of program related information /data we will be asking about. If you have any questions about this document or about our visit in general, please do not hesitate to contact [designated SPEPer].

For our visit [next week – or other time frame], we have a couple requests. First, we would like a <u>brief facility tour</u> conducted by/with a youth at the facility before we sit down with you to learn and dig more deeply in all the services received by youth at [facility]. This will help orient the SPEP™ folks who are not familiar with your facility and provide a context for talking about programs. Second, we would like to <u>request a meeting/interview space</u> at your facility where we can all sit down, meet with you and (as needed) treatment staff with knowledge of youth programs/placement. The latter program staff persons do not need to be available the entire visit but it is most effective if they are available to answer questions specific to program content, scheduling, program assignment, etc. as questions arise. It would also be very advantageous if the meeting space had a projector or LCD screen but if something like this is not available no worries, it is not absolutely necessary. Third, so we can be best prepared for our visit, please send an example of a <u>daily schedule</u> of services/school activities for the youth receiving services at your facility/agency by [date for receipt – usually at least a few days before the scheduled visit]. Please also include typical schedules for each “track” or program grouping if appropriate.

So you can better plan, we anticipate that we will be at your facility for half of the day (including the tour). Our general agenda will include:

- Facility tour
- Review of the SPEP™ model and process and why the detailed program information is needed
- Review of how the program information gathered during the tour will be used
- Review of the daily schedule to understand each and every service the youth receive (may include additional questions to specific program staff/facilitators etc.)
- Wrap up and discussion of next steps

Thanks so much and please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to meeting with you [date].

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< SAMPLE >

SPEP™ Pre-Visit Checklist

To make the best use of your time, for our upcoming SPEP™ classification visit on ***********, we have broken out the information/data we will be asking about by each of the SPEP™ key components below.

Types of programs

- Identification of any "tracks" within which youth with a certain diagnosis, need, gender, sex, and/or risk are grouped together for treatment purposes (e.g., Alcohol & Drug, general population or level 1 boys, level 2 boys, and medical need boys)
- If this is a residential facility, please provide an example of a daily schedule of services/school activities for the youth receiving services at your facility/agency. Please also include typical schedules for each "track" or program grouping if appropriate.
- For all programs/services received by youth in your facility/agency:
  - The name of the service used by your agency/location
  - A brief description of *each* identified service or program component
  - A copy of the service protocol/guide (e.g., a treatment manual with which staff providing the service are familiar) if available
- A treatment staff representative with knowledge of juvenile programming and placement for your facility/agency should be available to answer questions specific to program content, scheduling, program assignment, etc. during our planned visit.

Program delivery

For each program/service identified above, please be ready to describe how the following information is tracked:

- Training received in that specific service type; the amount and recency of such training
- Educational and experiential background of staff responsible for providing each service
- Any procedures in place (a) to monitor adherence to the protocol and other aspects of quality by those providing service, and (b) to take corrective action when significant departures from the protocol or lapses in quality are identified
- The amount of treatment time each juvenile receives for each program/service identified above broken down as:
  - Duration: the interval between the first day the program/service is provided and the last day it is provided (e.g., 12 weeks) for each juvenile receiving that service
  - Face-to face contact hours: the total number of contact hours with the service experienced by each juvenile during a specified service period
- A data system and/or quality assurance staff representative with practical knowledge of the information/data listed above should be available to answer questions and provide clarification during our planned visit

Thanks so much. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about the classification process or SPEP™ in general. We would be happy to provide you with any additional information and/or clarification.

Names of SPEPers conducting the classification*
Preferred contact information