

Roca's High Risk Youth Intervention Model: Initial Implementation Evaluation Report

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INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that 15 percent of the population between ages 16 and 24 is **disconnected**.¹ While there are some variations in the definition of this concept, there appears to be some general agreement that disconnected youth are those young people between 16 and 24 who are not in school and not employed (others have added that they are also not married). The United States Government Accountability Office defines disconnected youth as “youth aged 14 to 24 who are not in school and not working, or who lack family or other support networks.”²

A longitudinal study by MaCurdy et. al. using National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth show that 93 percent of those who disconnect for the first time reconnect within three years.³ This is promising except that subsequent disconnection episodes are likely, particularly among youth in disadvantaged families. More than 16 percent of males disconnect again in a year, 33 percent in 2 years, and 44 percent within three years. The figures for young women show that one in ten disconnects a second time by the one year mark, one quarter by the end of two years and a third by year three. It is clear that longer term interventions are needed for those most at risk.

The greatest concern is for those young people who are disconnected for extended periods of time. It is this group which in adulthood is more likely to have lower incomes, no health insurance, difficulty obtaining and retaining employment,⁴ and to contribute to increased crime rates and a greater number of children living in

¹ Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., Pond, N., Trub'skyy, M., Fogg, N., & Palma, S. (2003). *Left behind in the labor market: Labor market problems for the nation's out-of-school, young adult populations*. Chicago, IL: Northeastern University, Center for Labor Market Studies for Alternative Schools Network as cited in Hair, E., Ph.D., Moore, K., Ph.D., Ling, T., MA, McPhee-Baker, C., BA, and Brown, B., Ph.D., (2009). *Youth who are Disconnected and those who then Reconnect: Assessing the Influence of Family, Programs, Peers and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends Research Brief, Publication #2009-37.

² United States Government Accountability Office. *Disconnected Youth: Federal Action Could Address Some of the Challenges Faced by Local Programs That Reconnect Youth to Education and Employment*. Washington, D.C.: February 2008.

³ MaCurdy, T., Keating, B. & Nagavarapu, S. (2006). *Profiling the Plight of Disconnected Youth in America*. 27.

⁴ Hair, E., Ph.D., Moore, K., Ph.D., Ling, T., MA, McPhee-Baker, C., BA, and Brown, B., Ph.D., (2009). *Youth who are Disconnected and those who then Reconnect: Assessing the Influence of Family, Programs, Peers and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends Research Brief, Publication #2009-37.

poverty.⁵ In addition, young women who remain disconnected for three or more years are more likely to receive public assistance in adulthood.⁶

While it has been determined that young people who “participated in some sort of job training, job search, or school-to-work program during their high school years were less likely to experience disconnection than youth who did not participate in this type of program,”⁷ we know that there are many young people who will not and do not participate in such programs even when available. In a July 2009 article published in *Child Trends*, Hail et. al. suggest that recruiting and holding on to this group, the group which does not participate, may “require stronger and more persistent outreach, more intensive services, and more long-term participation.”⁸

Roca, Inc., a community-based organization in Chelsea, Massachusetts has developed a High Risk Youth Intervention Model to address the issues discussed above. It serves the areas of Chelsea, Revere, and East Boston, Massachusetts, and surrounding communities, in which the risk factors for disconnection occur in relatively high concentrations. The risk factors related to disconnection include family poverty level, single-parent homes or young people not living with either parent, parental unemployment, lower educational achievement of parents and welfare receipt.⁹ Three-quarters of Roca’s participants live in the cities of Chelsea and Revere. Twenty-four percent of Chelsea residents had incomes below poverty level (compared with 10% statewide); Revere’s rate is 11 percent.¹⁰ In the first quarter of 2009, Both Chelsea and Revere had higher unemployment rates than Massachusetts as a whole.¹¹ Forty-one percent of Chelsea’s residents have less than a high school education; the figure for Revere is 23 percent (compared with 15% statewide).¹²

Roca purposely seeks out those young people who do not and will not participate in school or other community programs which may prevent or repair disconnection. Roca recognizes that the young people are not participating and engages them in relationships designed to work with them over the course of up to five

⁵ MaCurdy, T., Keating, B. & Nagavarapu, S. (2006). *Profiling the Plight of Disconnected Youth in America*. 1.

⁶ Hair, E., Ph.D., Moore, K., Ph.D., Ling, T., MA, McPhee-Baker, C., BA, and Brown, B., Ph.D., (2009). *Youth who are Disconnected and those who then Reconnect: Assessing the Influence of Family, Programs, Peers and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends Research Brief, Publication #2009-37.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 2005 – 2007 3-Year Estimates*. Retrieved July 21, 2009 from American Fact Finder website: <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

¹¹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics database. Retrieved July 21, 2009 from Bureau of Labor Statistics website: <http://www.bls.gov/data/>

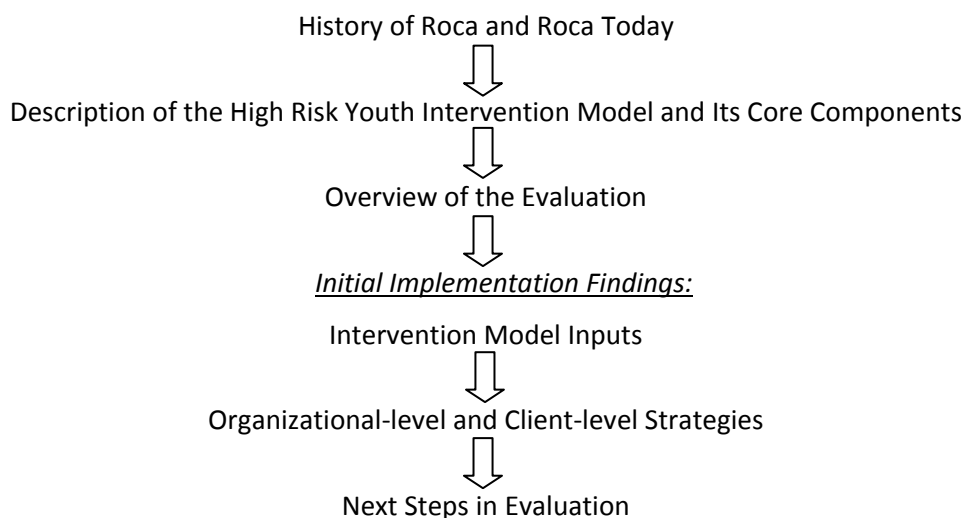
¹² Massachusetts Executive Office of Health & Human Services, Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Information, Statistics, Research, & Evaluation. (2009). *MassCHIP: Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile (Version 3.0 r323)* [Software]. Available from <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2subtopic&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Researcher&L2=Community+Health+and+Safety&L3=MassCHIP&L4=Download+MassCHIP&sid=Eeohhs2>

years so that they can benefit from life skills, educational, and employment programming. They outreach to these young people multiple times per week each week not only for recruitment but to retain them and support them until they are sustaining reconnections to education and employment.

In addition to targeting disconnected youth, Roca targets **disengaged** youth, those still in school, but who are on the verge of dropping out, and refugees, immigrants and others who are only tenuously connected to educational and social institutions. It is engagement with these institutions that assist a young person along the pathway to productive adulthood. Wald and Martinez estimate that 20 of every 100 youth are at risk before age 25, “yet, only five to seven percent will reach age 25 without connecting in a meaningful way to employment and social support systems.”¹³ It is the five to seven percent with whom Roca works.

This report provides a brief history of Roca and where Roca is today. Next there is an overview of the core components of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model and a description of the evaluation of the model. The initial, descriptive implementation evaluation findings follow and are organized according to the logic model. First is a description of the inputs or resources necessary for the implementation of the intervention model. Next is a description of both the organizational level and client level strategies. Lastly is a brief overview of next steps for the implementation and impact evaluation of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT



¹³ Wald and Martinez as cited in Rosch, J., Brinson, D., & Hassel, B. (2008). *Youth at high risk of disconnection: A data update of Michael Wald and Tia Martinez's Connected by 25: Improving life chances of the country's most vulnerable 14-24 year olds* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from Annie E. Casey Foundation website: <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid=%7B61CC54FE-28E6-443A-8421-25CBD8D6B90D%7D>

BRIEF HISTORY OF ROCA

The high prevalence of teen birth rates in various communities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prompted the establishment of a partnership between the state and four local communities: Chelsea, Fall River, Lawrence, and Springfield in 1986. Envisioned as broad-based coalitions, these communities spearheaded Massachusetts' first statewide teen pregnancy prevention initiative launched from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with funding from its Teen Challenge Fund. Coalitions in these communities were required to pursue programs and strategies that focused on health care access, comprehensive health education, and youth development. In 1988, through a single grant from the Teen Challenge Fund, and aligned with the state's vision to address the challenges associated with high teenage birth rates, a passionate and committed group of young people and adults joined together to form Roca, Inc. to address teen pregnancy prevention and violence in and around the city of Chelsea.

Within five years of Roca's establishment, the leadership and staff began to recognize commonalities among the youth served through this initiative. It was increasingly noted that many young people in the service area, including those at high risk for pregnancy, were also known to have histories of interaction with various government and community public systems, e.g., public welfare, youth services, family services, and criminal justice systems. The compounding impact of poverty and violence in the community and the breaking down of pro-social outlets in the young person's life were contributing factors to public systems involvement. This systems involvement was noticeably becoming their de facto tie and precarious linkage to mainstream society. In response, Roca, with financial support from a prominent foundation, created the Via Project in 2003. Via began its "street school" working with the most at-risk – those young people who were street-, court- and gang-involved – to get them re-engaged in education. In addition to the street school, Roca worked to build partnerships with other organizations, such as the City of Chelsea and the Chelsea Police Department, to better support young people. This work was and is known as "engaged institutions."

The work with the Via participants incorporated youth worker-participant relationship components because it had become clear in the early years of Roca that it is necessary to build relationships with participants and be committed to staying in those relationships until behavior changes were evidenced. These relationships were important ingredients in reconnecting young people to education. Via also revealed the needs of this population around employment. During this same time, Roca's Executive Director came across the stages of change in research literature and realized that those stages directly apply to how Roca was doing its work. In this way, Via was the project in which the programming components (education and employment),

relationships, and engaged institutions, all within the context stages of change, were tested out and further developed, leading to the development of what is known today as Roca’s High Risk Youth Intervention Model.

FORMALIZING A MODEL

In fall 2005, the organization embarked on a process with David E.K. Hunter, Ph.D. to develop Roca’s theory of change. This theory of change was “designed to help Roca enhance its organizational resources, management strengths, and staff capabilities in order to maintain the high quality and effectiveness of its current programs while growing in scale – in essence, to become the operational core of its business plan.”¹⁴

The theory of change was divided into two parts – programmatic and organizational. The key components of both are shown in the following two tables.

The programmatic piece theorized that Roca participants would experience positive outcomes through the implementation of relentless outreach, relationships for the purpose of change, peacemaking circles and skill-building opportunities. This compilation of strategies still exists today.

¹⁴ Hunter, D., *Roca Theory of Change*, November 13, 2005 (edited 6/2/06).

Programmatic Theory	
If Roca implements these strategies over the course of 3 years...	Roca's participants will experience....
Relentless street work and outreach	<p><u>Short Term:</u></p> <p>Improvement of life skills appropriate to developmental status (e.g., conflict management, parenting skills)</p> <p>Knowledge acquisition (e.g., effects of drugs on the body, key information about sexuality)</p> <p>Improvement of attitudes (e.g., values school, appreciates need for being on time)</p> <p><u>Intermediate Term:</u></p>
Transformational relationships	<p>Improved behavior appropriate to life status (e.g., decreased school suspensions, decreased drug use, reduced criminal behavior)</p> <p><u>Short and Intermediate Term:</u></p>
Peacemaking circles	<p>Development of relationships with adults (other than Roca staff)</p> <p><u>Long Term:</u></p>
Create opportunities for life skills training, educational and employment	<p>Improvement in educational accomplishments (e.g., re-engagement in education, grade promotion, earning GED, graduation)</p> <p>Improvement in work accomplishments (i.e., gain and/or retain employment)</p> <p>Fewer dangerous situations</p> <p>Less or no dangerous/destructive sexual behavior</p> <p>No gang involvement</p> <p>No criminal behavior</p> <p>No substance use</p> <p>Positive interactions with public systems/institutions</p>

The organizational-level theory recognized that single programs were not sufficient to impact the trajectories of high risk young people. Instead it is the combination of strategies and programs that would bring about change. The theory also documented that in order to reach the desired outcomes, leadership had to be strong and program performance tracked over time.

Organizational Theory	
If Roca...	The organization will experience....
Moves from programs to programming	Centralized management of transformational relationships (e.g., performance tracking system is used to assess and follow progress of relationships)
Moves from a culture of dedication to a culture of success	Development and implementation of quality, individualized programming available to all young people (e.g., content area specialists are hired to manage and deliver each programming area, participant progress in services is tracked)
Builds its senior leadership team	Staff and management buy-in to a new organizational structure The implementation of a performance management system
Brings its Board to a new level of development	Transparent use of tracking and outcome data Use of performance management data in staff supervision
Develops a new business plan to support its organizational objectives	Use of performance management data to adjust programming and services Celebrations of successes based on data Sustainable per unit cost of service

One of the hallmarks of the process of formalizing the model was the incorporation into the model of the stages of change within the Transtheoretical Model of Change credited to James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente of the University of Rhode Island. The stages are:

1. Pre-contemplation: “not intending to take action and characterized as resistant, unmotivated”
2. Contemplation: Thinking about change, but “more aware of the pros of changing, but acutely aware of cons”
3. Preparation or Planning: “People intend to take action”, and are thinking about ways to make change happen. “Individuals in preparation have a plan for action such as going to a recovery group, consulting a counselor, talking to physician, buying a self-help book, or relying on a self-change approach”
4. Action: “People have made specific, overt modifications in their lifestyles.”

5. Maintenance or Sustaining: “Less tempted to relapse and are increasingly more confident that they can continue their changes”¹⁵

The organization aligned its approach to engagement of young people with the stages of change. This alignment provided an evidence-based framework for youth workers to determine which stage of readiness for change their participants were in. In doing so, youth workers could engage them in conversations and programming for which they were ready and motivated enough to stay, with the aim of motivating them towards increased engagement and positive and healthy behavioral changes.

Roca’s efforts to formalize its unique intervention model were also furthered in 2005 with the adoption of Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software. ETO is a customizable data collection system, which allowed Roca to begin to track and measure components of its approach to engagement and youth participation in programming. Roca built into ETO the ability to track a participant’s stage of change within the youth worker-participant relationship as well as within the elements of the participant’s service plan. ETO data provides management and staff the opportunity to enter and use individual and organizational level data to assess processes and progress toward outcomes.

With its theory of change, incorporation of the stages of change, and systematic data collection Roca had formed a model for working with at-risk young people known today as the High Risk Youth Intervention model.

ROCA TODAY

Here in 2009, Roca has a community-based model for High Risk Youth Intervention that has been implemented for four years and is poised to:

1. Be evaluated for its impact on young people; and,
2. Demonstrate its promise as a unique model of intervention with those young people often left behind, left out and thrown away.

¹⁵ Prochaska, J.O. (1999). *How do people change, and how can we change to help many more people?* As cited in Hubble, M.; Duncan, Barry L.; Miller, Scott D. (Eds), *The heart and soul of change: What works in therapy.* (pp. 227-255). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

The organization is committed to data collection to monitor and improve processes and practices so that better client outcomes can be achieved. And, it is committed to subjecting itself to rigorous study on behalf of its current and future participants with the hope of informing better outcomes for its young people and young people in other geographic areas as well.

POPULATIONS SERVED

The organization serves¹⁶ more than 600 youth and young adults each year through its intensive model, 672 in fiscal year 2008 and 728 the following year.

Roca aims to serve those young people **ages of 14 to 24** most at risk each year in the Chelsea, MA and surrounding areas. Between July 1, 2007 and September 30, 2009, 93 percent of those enrolled¹⁷ were within that age range at the time of intake (enrollment); and slightly more than half of those enrolled during this time were residents of Chelsea, MA.

Age at Intake (n=681) ¹⁸		
Age Group	Number	Percent
14-15	28	4.1
16-17	113	16.6
18-20	330	48.5
21-24	166	24.4
25+	44	6.5

¹⁶ Participants “served” includes participants newly enrolled during the time period as well as those who had enrolled prior to the start of a specified timeframe who were either dismissed in the period or active during the entire period. Participants transferred to the Jail Program are included here. Those dismissed as ineligible are not counted as served.

¹⁷ “Enrolled” means that the participant had an intake. The enrolled numbers include participants who were later deemed ineligible.

¹⁸ Data shown in the tables in this section is drawn from the Central Intake in ETO and represents the 684 participants enrolled between 7/1/07 and 9/30/09. Where the n is less than 684, data was missing from the Central Intake form.

City of Residence at Intake (n=631)		
City	Number	Percent
Chelsea	358	56.7
Revere	103	16.3
East Boston	90	14.3
Other	28	4.4
Everett	20	3.2
Charlestown	13	2.1
Lynn	13	2.1
Winthrop	6	1.0

Roca serves nearly equal proportions of males (49%) and females (51%)¹⁹ and three of every four participants is identified or identifies as Hispanic (73%). Participants identified or indentifying as Non-Hispanic comprise less than ten percent each of the total population.

Race/Ethnicity of Participants (n=637)		
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	466	73.2
African American	55	8.6
White	53	8.3
Asian	18	2.8
Other	18	2.8
Multi-racial	14	2.2
Bi-racial	13	2.0

¹⁹ n=622

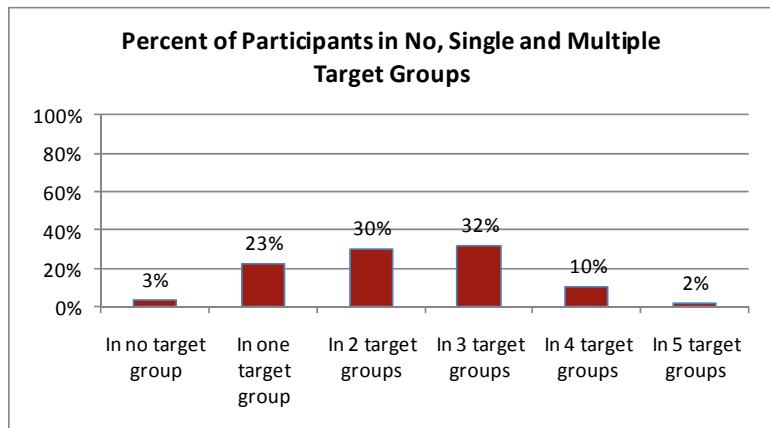
In terms of economic status, half of Roca’s participants and/or their families receive some type of public assistance and seven of ten participants are unemployed when they are enrolled.

Public Assistance Status of Participants or Participant Families at Intake (n=547)		
Receives Assistance	Number	Percent
Yes	270	49.4
No	277	50.6

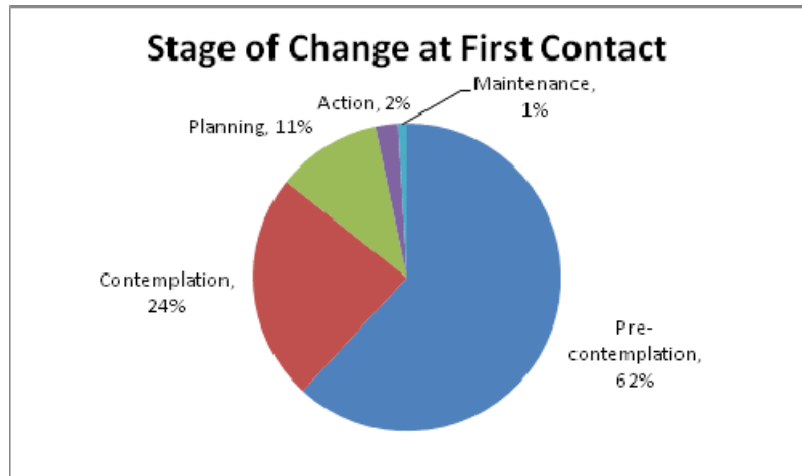
Employment Status of Participants at Intake (n=591)		
Status	Number	Percent
Working	166	28.1
Not working	425	71.9

In addition to the age criteria (14 through 24) mentioned above, Roca seeks to serve young people who are involved in extreme criminal or antisocial behaviors or who are extremely isolated. Roca identifies this target population by requiring that a young person fall into at least one of the following groups; however, most fall into more than one category:

- **Involved with a gang and/or involved in street life;**
- **Involved with the Court or other public systems;**
- **On the verge of dropping out of school;**
- **Dropped out of school;**
- **Is him or herself a young parent; and**
- **Is a refugee or immigrant.**



While there are organizations around the country which serve similar groups, there is a characteristic Roca looks for that is unique. Roca seeks out young people who are **in pre-contemplation or contemplation about living healthy and productive lives**. The pie chart below shows the stage of change at which youth workers rated participants based on the initial interaction. A full 88 percent were in pre-contemplation (negative toward staff and program) or contemplation (shows some interest, but no engagement). These are the young people who are “not ready, not willing and not able”²⁰ to participate pro-socially in or meaningfully contribute to their communities.



It is this group, the unprepared, unwilling and the unable, that has traditionally posed recruitment and retention issues for organizations looking to serve high-risk youth. By virtue of not being ready, willing or able to participate in services or other interventions, these young people are the ones who do not seek out services (and often outright reject them), or, if they do seek them out or agree to participate, do not participate consistently or meaningfully.

ORGANIZATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Roca is committed to working with its participants for the purpose of change, specifically behavior change that will **assist them in living out of harm’s way** and **with economic independence**. Roca’s approach with its participants is grounded in certain philosophical beliefs. The core belief is that change is possible for all of the young people. The organization also believes that people change in relationships. At the heart of the idea that all participants can change through relationships are three underlying approaches:

- *Trust*: Youth workers build trusting, long-term relationships with young people and others in their lives, including family, other adults and institutions.
- *Truth*: Youth workers are truthful with young people. They are truthful about what is going on in the lives of young people, the challenges, the realities of their families and communities, and that change is difficult but possible.

²⁰ Anisha Chablani, Personal Interview, 12 August 2009.

- *Transformation:* The trusting and truthful relationships support and encourage personal transformation through participation in life skills, education and employment programming and opportunity.

Another core belief is that relapses are inevitable and provide opportunities for learning and growth. Roca thinks about relapses in terms of the stages of change. A relapse occurs when a young person experiences a regression within the stages. For example, a participant who is in action around getting her GED (regularly attending GED classes) stops attending for a period of time. A participant who has been in the planning stage around substance use (has recognized it as a problem and talks about how to address the substance use) for a few months may revert to refusing to participate in conversations about using substances and deny that it presents a problem for him. Relapses in readiness for change and in behaviors are expected because change is difficult. Relapses are a time when many other programs would dismiss a participant from the intervention (e.g., a program participant may be dismissed from participation when she stops showing up for GED classes or when a participant is charged with a criminal offense). Instead, a Roca youth worker sees a relapse as a time to say to the young person that the youth worker is not going away, is not going to abandon the young person when he or she needs support the most. Relapses are considered necessary as they provide an opportunity for youth workers to help young people understand the impact of their choices as they work through setbacks.

REVISED THEORY OF CHANGE

In early 2009, Roca once again engaged David Hunter of Hunter Consulting, LLC to assist with further refinement of the organization's programmatic theory of change. The result was the same core strategies being used to achieve a smaller, more focused set of client-level indicators and outcomes to occur in discreet timeframes. This refinement allowed Roca to focus its resources on those outcomes considered by the organization as most important to economic independence and living out of harm's way.

The organization has historically delivered its interventions through program tracks organized around the different target populations. While these tracks still exist, they are less important as the entire organization is now focused on the core participant outcomes. The same strategies, transformational relationships (including intensive outreach and follow up), life skills, education and employment programming, and engaged institutions, are applied across participant populations to achieve the same outcomes. The only difference now is that delivery of the economic independence programming

component is now organized around the participants' school status (in school or out of school) rather than around demographic or other behavioral subgroups.

The new version of the theory also specified the outcomes for a less intensive two-year follow up period. The outcomes for the 2009 theory of change are shown on the following page.

Roca's 2009 Theory of Change

Roca's 2009 Theory of Change				
	Phase 1 (year 1)	Phase 2 (years 2-3)		Phase 3 (years 4-5)
Area of Focus	Indicators	Short Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	
Engagement (all participants)	Progressed through stages of change within the youth worker-participant relationship to a point of being ready for phase 2	Increased readiness for change (positive gain score from baseline URICA to follow up) Increased bond with staff (positive gain scores on Bond with Staff scale from baseline to follow up)	Sustained constructive peer relationships (can identify at least one constructive relationship) Sustained constructive peer relationships (can identify at least one constructive relationship)	Sustained constructive peer relationships Sustained constructive peer relationships
Economic Independence: Education (in-school youth)	Participation in programming and groups (2-3 times/month)	Increased success in school (no more than 3 absences from school per quarter; decreased suspensions; on-time grade promotion; does not repeat 9 th grade)	High school graduation (diploma) Increased financial literacy (positive gain scores on pre/post tests)	Connection to post secondary education (sustained enrollment) or sustained employment retention (18-month retention) at 200% above poverty level
Economic Independence: Education (out-of-school youth)	Participation in programming and groups (2-3 times/month)		Increased educational gains (positive gain scores on educational assessments; pass 2 of 5 GED areas; field-accepted certification) Increased financial literacy (positive gain scores on pre/post tests)	Sustained educational gains (positive gain scores on educational assessments; GED; connection to post-secondary education for industry certification)
Economic Independence: Employment (all participants)	Participation in programming and groups (2-3 times/month)	Increased workforce soft skills (positive gain scores on workforce readiness assessment; sustained enrollment in transitional employment)	Employment retention (6 month retention in full time employment)	Sustain employment retention (18-month retention) at 200% above poverty level
Living out of Harm's Way (all participants)	Participation in programming and groups (2-3 times/month)	Increased social and emotional skills (positive gain scores on pre/post tests)	Decreased criminal/delinquent behavior (No arrests) Decreased pregnancy (no pregnancies until age 24) Accesses appropriate services (accesses referrals made) Increased social and emotional skills (positive gain scores on pre/post tests) Shows positive movement on stages of change related to behavior outcomes on service plan	Sustain decreased criminal/delinquent behavior (No arrests) Sustain decreased pregnancy (no pregnancies until age 24) Sustained use of appropriate services (accesses referrals made)

THE HIGH RISK YOUTH INTERVENTION MODEL

PURPOSE

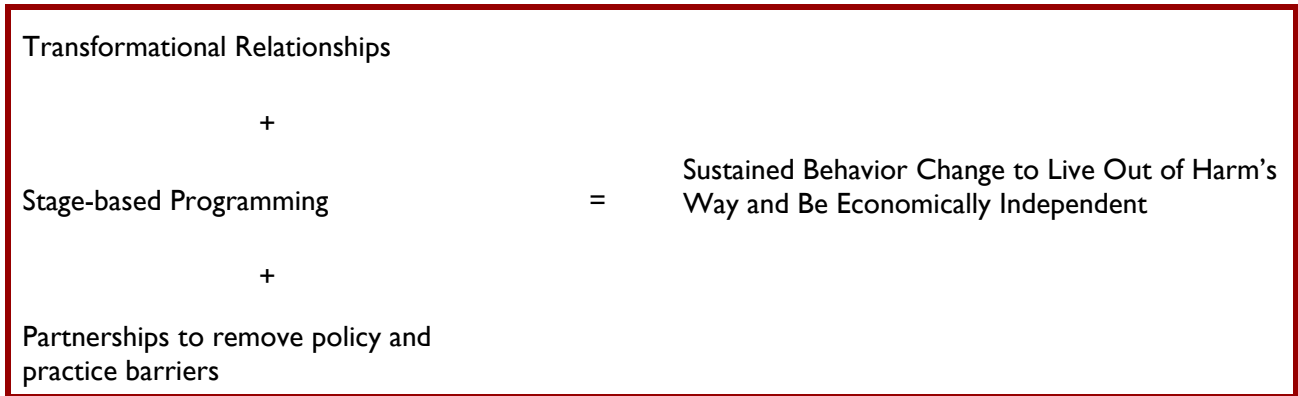
The High Risk Youth Intervention Model is intended to work with disengaged and disconnected young people intensively over a period of three years, with two years of follow up, to move them toward living more safely and toward economic independence. The ultimate goal is young people living free of violence and poverty.

DESCRIPTION AND COMPONENTS

The High Risk Youth Intervention Model is a five-year, cognitive behavioral intervention intended to bring about behavioral changes in the lives of the young people most at risk in Chelsea, MA and its surrounding communities. These young people are:

- Between 14 and 24 years of age at the time of enrollment;
- In one or more of the following groups:
 - Involved with a gang and/or involved in street life
 - Involved with the Court or other public systems
 - On the verge of dropping out of school
 - Dropped out of school
 - Is him or herself a young parent
 - Is a refugee or immigrant; and
- In pre-contemplation or contemplation about living a healthy and/or productive life.

Relationships are the core of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model, but the relationship, called a **transformational relationship**, must be implemented in combination with **programming** which provides skill building opportunities. A third component, **engaged institutions**, recognizes that Roca can ready participants for adulthood, yet other community organizations and systems can impact their development and success as well. Roca works with these organizations (e.g., police, health clinics) and systems (e.g., Departments of Children and Families and Transitional Assistance) to reduce the barriers they often unintentionally impose. Below is a depiction of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model in its simplest form.



TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The underlying theory behind the High Risk Youth Intervention Model is that people change in relationships – that change comes about within the context of mutuality, shared experience, and a sense of responsibility not only to oneself but to another. Roca engages young people in relationships **for the purpose of change**. These relationships are called transformational relationships. They are not relationships based upon power dynamics; Roca is not a mandated intervention. They are relationships in which a significant amount of time (up to one year) is allotted to building trust. These intensive relationships are used to consistently and frequently engage young people in skill building and other opportunities over a period of up to three years, to motivate them to participate and to decide for themselves that they want to change and take concrete actions to change, to support them when they have setbacks or relapses, to be there when their families are unable or unwilling to be there, to protect them when they are not protecting themselves from harm, and to challenge them when they are not challenging themselves.

The core of the transformational relationships, or the main strategy for building them, is frequent and consistent outreach and follow-up. It is what Roca calls **relentless outreach**. It is knowing where and with whom the young person spends time, going to find a young person when she is avoiding contact, going to pick him up when he does not show for class, going to court with the young person or going to a medical appointment because there is no other adult who will do that. It is showing up during the hard times and at the times when things are going well. In essence, relentless outreach is being in the young person’s life no matter what the circumstances for a period of years.

The participant-youth worker relationships are thought about in terms of three phases. These phases reflect the depth or level of the participant-youth worker relationship; they are not correlated with the

stages of change as a participant can be at any stage at any point in the five-year relationship. The first four to 12 months (**phase 1**) is a time during which the youth worker seeks to build a trusting relationship with the participant through frequent (2 to 3 times per week) and consistent (each week) contact. The participant will also join in programming during this time, largely as a way to for staff to engage them through something that is of interest to them. Engagement activities also serve to expose participants to what Roca has to offer.

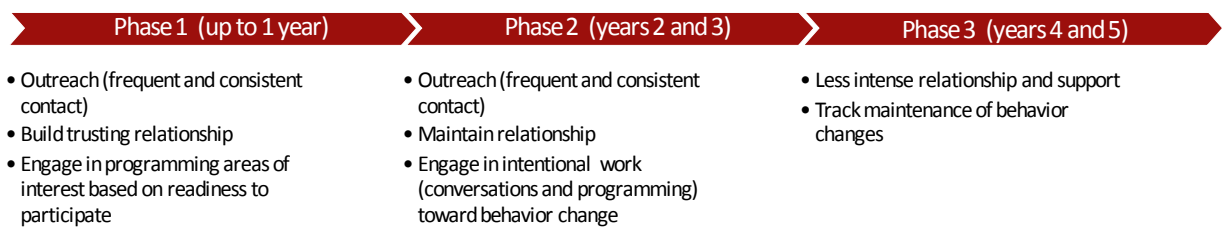
The next two plus years (**phase 2**) is designed to continue the youth worker-participant relationship with the same level of contact – two to three contacts per week. In phase 2, the relationship is used to encourage change in those areas causing most harm to the safety of the young person and preventing movement toward economic independence. The relationship is used to keep the young person engaged in a change process while the youth worker pushes and challenges the participant to address the issues and barriers in their lives. At the start of this phase, youth workers and their supervisors create a service plan that identifies concrete outcome areas on which to focus their work with young people. In this phase, the work (the relationship and programming) becomes more intentional in that interaction and activities (programs) are used to increase readiness for change in specific areas. These areas can include:

- Decreasing substance use;
- Increasing educational engagement;
- Increasing engagement in employment;
- Decreasing unhealthy relationships;
- Pregnancy prevention;
- Increasing court compliance;
- Decreasing street and/or gang involvement;
- Decreasing antisocial or aggressive behavior; and
- Increasing access to immigrant/refugee services.

It is these areas that can be included in the service plan developed at the start of phase 2. The goal is for the young person to concretely demonstrate behavior changes in the areas identified on the service plan by the end of year three (e.g., the work to increase educational engagement is expected

to result in a diploma for in-school youth²¹ or passing at least 2 of the 5 GED subjects for out-of-school youth).

When participants achieve a set of behavioral indicators, participants graduate into **phase 3**. Phase 3 is a follow up period, lasting two years, in which fewer contacts are made and less intensive support is provided to help the young person sustain the gains made during the first two phases. In essence, phase 3 acts as a step-down from the intense youth worker-participant relationship. It also allows Roca to track these individuals for a period of time to see that the model is having a lasting impact.



STAGE-BASED PROGRAMMING

While Roca believes that the relationship component is necessary, the organization does not believe that it is enough to bring about the behavior changes it seeks for its participants. For this reason Roca offers an array of programming in three areas:

- Life skills and engagement (e.g., emotional literacy, substance abuse, physical engagement; field trips; peacemaking circles);
- Education (e.g., GED, ESL, pre-vocational classes); and
- Employment (e.g., job readiness classes; transitional employment).

This programming is designed and delivered to accommodate different levels of readiness to participate in a class, group, or program. This is done through offering a continuum of programs, from less to more structured, from informal to more formal. For example, if a participant is thinking about working toward her GED but has not demonstrated that she is ready to attend classes regularly (contemplation), the youth worker may bring her to a single session (drop-in) GED class. This allows the participant to experience the class, with the aim of using that experience to engage her in more regular programming.

²¹ If a participant is not yet in his or her senior year at the 3-year mark with Roca but it on track to graduate, the participant may be eligible for graduation to phase 3.

Programs delivered by Roca are not only intended to build specific skills, but they also provide a context for participants to recognize the barriers in their lives that are keeping them from educational gains and employment. If a young person is in the planning or action stage around employment and is in Roca's transitional employment program, that participation allows him to feel and understand that it is difficult to participate and succeed in work-related pursuits if he is using drugs each day, for example.

ENGAGED INSTITUTIONS

Years ago Roca recognized that, in order for its participants to have opportunities to be successful outside of and after involvement with Roca, it had to work with the other youth- and young adult-serving organizations that interact with their young people or serve them in some way. Roca adopted the Engaged Institutions strategy that, in essence, applies the principles and values of the transformational relationships it builds with young people to other organizations, such as police, probation, and schools. The goal of the Engaged Institutions strategy is to work to bring about changes in the ways organizations that serve Roca's populations "behave." Roca believes that this is the way to remove some of the barriers created by organizational and systemic policies and practices that can impede progress and hinder the achievement of safety and independence for high risk young people.

HOW THE COMPONENTS FIT TOGETHER

Roca's theory is that if it 1) builds transformational relationships with at-risk young people, 2) provides skill building opportunities through programming, and 3) works with partners to eliminate policy and practice barriers that young people encounter, that young people can move towards economic independence and living out of harm's way. These strategies are intended to produce short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes in three areas: engagement; economic independence; and living out of harm's way.

THE EVALUATION

Roca's commitment to ensuring that high risk youth are re-engaged and reconnected is demonstrated by its seeking a rigorous evaluation of its model. The lives of the young people are too important to rely on anecdotal indicators of the model's success; evaluation can identify for whom the model works, what in the model works and what is not having the desired effect. The organization is engaged in a multi-year evaluation for two primary purposes:

1. To assess its impact on the young people it serves; and
2. To demonstrate a model to achieve outcomes with a population of young people who are often excluded from opportunities, expected to be dependent on public systems as adults, or simply ignored.

This will be achieved through the conduct of implementation, outcome and impact evaluation.

Implementation evaluation documents a program, or in this case, a model and provides information about how closely the model is being implemented as it is intended or designed. The outcome evaluation will measure the effect of the intervention on young people served by Roca and whether the organization's specified outcomes are achieved. Lastly, the impact evaluation compares the effect of the intervention on Roca's participants with similar young people who are not exposed to the intervention.

IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This report is an initial look at the implementation of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model – what are its components and why they are implemented. A second report to more closely assess fidelity to the model is scheduled for June 2010. Broadly, the implementation evaluation seeks to answer these questions:

Organizational Level:

- What is Roca's program theory? How is that theory operationalized? Is Roca implementing activities that will lead to the stated outcomes?
- Which populations does Roca target? Who does Roca serve?
- What resources are invested in the High Risk Youth Intervention Model? Are resources, facilities and equipment, and funding adequate to support implementation of the model? Are resources used effectively and efficiently?
- How is Roca organized to implement the model?
- How long is the intervention intended to last? How long does it last?
- How does Roca coordinate with other agencies to support the intervention model?

- What type of programming does Roca provide?

Client Level:

- Which participants are engaged in the intervention? Which drop out prior to completion and why?
- What does the engagement of young people look like? How many contacts with young people occur? Does it differ over time? How?
- What type of programming and how much programming do participants receive? What is the quality of that programming?
- Which participants are not engaged in relationships and/or programming?
- Are participants satisfied with their involvement and interactions with Roca staff and programming?
- Are additional service needs identified? When? Are participants linked with services, if needed, and do they access the follow-up services?

INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

A logic model is a graphic presentation of the intervention model. It helps to guide the exploration of the following three questions:

- What conditions or risks do the targeted participants present that will need to be addressed by the intervention to be able to achieve positive outcomes?
- What interventions or experiences will the client have that create the strongest potential for success?
- What outcomes will the client experience, i.e., how will the client be impacted or changed as a result of the intervention?

Roca's High Risk Youth Intervention logic model is shown on the following page. It depicts the assumptions in Roca's model – that, to achieve sustained behavior change (long-term outcomes), there is a logical progression of circumstances that must occur. If sufficient resources are invested (e.g., funding, staff), a set of strategies can be applied. These strategies result in participation and products (outputs) that are tied directly to the specified short and medium-term outcomes.

Some logic models equate short-term outcomes with attitudinal changes that lead to behavior changes (medium-term outcomes) and overall improvements in well-being (long-term outcomes). Roca's logic model is a time-based model with the outcomes all focused on behaviors. It is not based on the assumption that increasing knowledge and changing attitudes lead to behavior change. Roca believes that, due to the dangerous lives many of its targeted young people lead, changed behaviors, regardless of attitudes, are the

outcomes that matter most. **Roca focuses solely on changing behaviors that will allow young people to be safe and to participate in education and employment.**

ROCA'S HIGH RISK YOUTH INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

Mission/Purpose:

Help disengaged and disenfranchised young people move out of violence and poverty.

Goals:

- To relentlessly engage young people in transformational relationships over long periods of time.
- To create opportunities for young people to develop competencies in life skills, education, and employment

Target Population:

-To demonstrate a powerful solution for young people to move out of harm's way and become economically independent
 Young people who are in pre-contemplation/contemplation with behavior change and are in one or more of these groups: 1) street, court, or gang involved, 2) immigrant and refugee newcomers, 3) young parents, 4) on the verge of dropping out or have dropped out

Inputs/Resources	Strategies/Activities	Outputs	Outcomes			
			Area of Focus	Short-term TR2 (years 1-2)	Medium-term TR2 (years 2-3)	Long-term TR3 (years 4-5)
Personnel	Organization-level: Train staff	# Staff trained	Engagement	-Increase Readiness for change -Increase Bond with Roca staff	-Sustained constructive Peer Relationships -Sustained Constructive adult relationships	-Sustained constructive Peer Relationships -Sustained Constructive adult relationships
Funding	Identify and serve target population	# Eligible participants				
Community partners	Engaged institutions	Procedure, practice, policy, and systemic change around high risk youth and their families	Education – In-school	-Increase Success in School	-High School Graduation -Increase Financial Literacy	-Connection to post secondary education or sustained employment
Referral sources	Measurement of processes	Management reports	Education – Out of school		-Increase Educational Gains -Increase Financial Literacy	-Sustain Educational Gains
Facility/physical resources	Client-level: Relentless efforts to build and deepen relationships	# Efforts and contacts with young people	Employment	-Increase Workforce Soft Skills	-Employment Retention	-Sustain Employment Retention
Advisors	Life skills and engagement activities/programming	Transformational relationships	Moving towards Out of Harm's Way		-Decrease Criminal/Delinquent Behavior -Decrease Pregnancy	-Sustain Decrease Criminal/Delinquent Behavior -Sustain Decrease Pregnancy
Efforts to Outcomes software	Educational programming (GED, ESL, Pre-voc) Employment programming and employment: (Basic transitional employment, advanced transitional employment, certification training, job development)	# Attending and completing programming and activities				

ALIGNMENT OF THE EVALUATION WITH THE ARTICULATION OF THE MODEL

The revisions to the theory of change discussed in a previous section moved the evaluation forward by providing clarification to both processes and outcomes. It necessitated the establishment of a process for eligibility determination, criteria for progression through the intervention, and set the stage for a revamp of all participant-level data collection instruments individually and collectively. So, while the evaluation team was documenting the inputs, strategies, outputs and measures, it was also working collaboratively with Roca to ensure the evaluation is aligned with the Model as articulated in the 2009 theory of change.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The process for determining participant eligibility is explained later in the report (in the organizational strategies section). It is mentioned here because the newly established process allows Roca and the evaluation team to record efforts expended from the very start of involvement with a potential Roca participant; previously, potential participants were placed on a pending list (wait list) and we did not know what efforts were made prior to enrollment or in cases where the participant was not ever placed on a youth worker's caseload.

The new process for enrollment allows youth workers and their supervisors to have 45 days to determine whether the young person fall within the targeted population and whether the participant can benefit from what Roca offers. ETO now provides information as to the reasons participants do not continue on in the High Risk Youth Intervention.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION

For the first time, in 2009, criteria were established for participants to transition from phase 1 to phase 2, and from phase 2 to graduation into less intensive intervention (these criteria are outlined in the Client Level Strategies section of the report). The articulation of criteria is significant because the decision making around movement through the intervention is now measurable, requiring that concrete behaviors and benchmarks be achieved. Previously, readiness to move from one phase to the next was a rather subjective determination.

STREAMLINING OF DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The data collection tools in ETO include:

- Central Intake (participant demographics, target group, contact information, referral information);
- Participant contacts and attendance to programming;
- Quarterly participant reports (youth worker-completed report on behavioral indicators); and
- Phase 2 participant assessment (participant-completed assessment focused on constructs related to the out of harm's way outcome).

The revised theory of change provided an opportunity to change and remove items from the different tools so that data collection would be as seamless as possible moving forward. The revisions led to shortened, more focused data collection and will allow the evaluation to have baseline (the Central Intake form) and follow up information (daily contacts and attendance, quarterly data, and annual data from participants in phase 2) to answer these questions: Who are the Roca participants and where are they starting from? What do they get from the intervention? Where are they across time behaviorally? Where are they in terms of out of harm's way measures, from their own perspective, starting in phase 2 and each year thereafter?

Aligning the evaluation and the theory of change are important milestones and not easily achieved. It challenged Roca and the evaluation team to make decisions about the model that have not yet been tested. It also required changes in practice and data collection, and staff training. This alignment does, however, position the High Risk Youth Intervention Model for rigorous study.

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION FINDINGS

This initial report describes the processes involved in implementing the High Risk Youth Intervention Model. In other words, it explains the leftmost columns of the logic model (below): the inputs or resources used to implement the model; the strategies and activities employed at the organizational and client levels; and the outputs or products of these strategies.

PROCESSES INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING THE HIGH RISK YOUTH INTERVENTION MODEL		
Inputs/Resources	Strategies/Activities	Outputs
Personnel	<u>Organization-level:</u> Train staff	# and % of staff trained
Funding	Identify and serve target population	# and % of eligible participants
Community partners	Engaged institutions	Procedure, practice, policy, and systemic change around high risk youth and their families
Referral sources	Measurement of processes	
Facility/physical resources	<u>Client-level:</u> Relentless efforts to build and deepen relationships	Management reports
Advisors	Life skills and engagement activities/programming	# and % of efforts and contacts with young people
Efforts to Outcomes software	Educational programming (GED, ESL, Pre-voc) Employment programming: (Basic transitional employment (KEY), Advanced transitional employment, Certification training, Job development	Transformational relationships # and % attending and completing programming and activities

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for implementation evaluation; this report relies almost exclusively on qualitative information to describe Roca’s processes. The next implementation report, which will examine Roca’s fidelity to its model, will be heavily reliant on quantitative data. Existing documentation was reviewed to help clarify the model. Roca has an extensive Staff Development Guidebook that contains staff competencies and provides background material on each competency area. It helps to explain what is expected of youth workers and how they are expected to perform outreach work with participants. Other documents reviewed include narrative descriptions of the model, theory of change documents, an organizational chart, a Roca publication entitled “Intervention Work with High-Risk Young People: Foundational Elements, Guiding Principles, Ideas, and Questions for Discussion,” and programming schedules.

In addition to review of documentation, interviews were conducted with staff at different levels, specifically, the management, program coordinator, and youth worker levels. These interviews served as the primary data source for the history and thinking behind the High Risk Youth Intervention Model and understanding the resources invested and strategies employed. Focus groups were also conducted with Roca participants. Information was also gained through evaluator-Roca work sessions. Participation in performance measurement and data improvement work sessions were instrumental in understanding key definitions within the model.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE MODEL

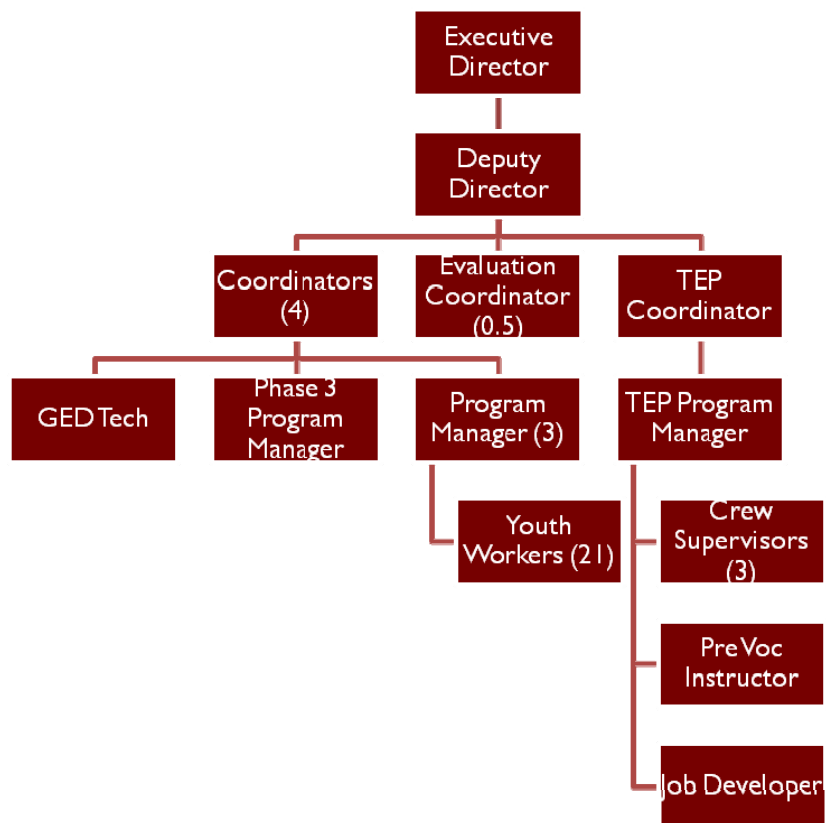
The resources Roca has obtained and continues to seek to implement its model include personnel, funding, community partners, referral sources, a facility and equipment, expert advisors, and information technology.

PERSONNEL

Roca employs staff at four different levels to implement the model²². These levels are:

- Senior Management (Executive and Deputy Director)
- Middle Management (Coordinators)
- Program Managers (select Senior Youth Workers)
- Senior Youth Workers and Youth Workers

HIGH RISK YOUTH INTERVENTION MODEL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



²² This discussion does not include administrative, financial or development staff or special program staff.

Because the High Risk Youth Intervention Model is a relationships-based model, its effectiveness is largely dependent on the frontline **youth workers**. A description of the youth worker position and its responsibilities is shown in the text box below.

Youth Worker Position Overview:

Youth Workers at Roca have the primary responsibility of engaging very high risk youth and young adults through relationships and programming that helps them to change their behavior and shift the trajectories of their lives through implementing Roca's High-Risk Youth Intervention Model.

Responsibilities:

- Understand, practice and promote the vision, mission, and values of the organization.
- Implement Roca's High Risk Youth Intervention Model:
 - Transformational Relationships
 - Maintain a caseload of 25 participants.
 - Youth workers are expected to have actual, intentional contact with every participant on their caseload 2-3 times a week.
 - Relentless Outreach
 - Outreach is on-the-street, in places where young people hang-out, in people's homes, and at the schools.
 - Relentlessly showing up in young people's lives, especially through times of relapse.
 - Stage Based Programming
 - Engagement of a minimum of 80% of caseload in programming (4x per month).
 - Strategic recruitment to ensure that participants are engaging in appropriate programming.
 - Work with team to plan and implement engagement activities.
 - Lead and implement life skills programming as determined by coordinator.
 - Engage participants in appropriate educational prevocational, employment programming.
 - Engaged Institution Strategy
 - Through dialogue and action, maintain relationships with the other adults in the lives of the young people.
 - Work with employers with the intention of job retention
 - Communicate with school personnel to support educational success and advancement.
 - Communicate with case workers, probation officers etc as needed.
- Maintain Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data base through data entry of all work with participants.
- Utilize ETO reports and data to track participant progress and own performance in moving young people through change process and achieving expected performance indicator targets
- Actively participate in the safety of the space for all participants through building coverage and communication across the organization.
- Demonstrate mindfulness for the resources that Roca possesses, and actively work to maintain their functioning.
- Participate in staff trainings and development.
- Commit to engage in personal and professional growth and competence development to increase capacity to serve young every day
- Other tasks as assigned

When Roca hires youth workers it looks for individuals with the following qualifications:

- BA preferred/Equivalent community experience accepted
- Bilingual skills desirable (English-Spanish)
- Understanding and experience working with street involved high risk young people.
- Minimum of three years experience working with young people
- Experience in conflict resolution, violence prevention, etc.

- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Capacity to use self intentionally and strategically to help young people change behaviors
- Creative problem-solving and thinking
- Excellent at organizing, managing and completing multiple complex projects and tasks simultaneously with thoroughness, accuracy, timeliness and good humor.
- Self-motivation, initiative, and sound judgment are essential.
- Ability to work as a part of a team.
- Willingness and ability to work outside of normal business hours, and Holidays and/or weekends as needed.²³

In addition to the required qualifications, staff and participants identify those characteristics that make an effective youth worker.

Characteristics of an Effective Youth Worker

From the perspective of young people, youth workers need to...

- Be patient, determined, persistent, selfless, caring, strong and committed
- Be open minded and willing to put themselves out there
- Not give up
- Have heart and love what they do
- Have experience in life, have struggled themselves and changed; it is not just about education, they have to understand people²⁴

From the perspective of staff, youth workers need to...

- Be patient, understanding, caring, reliable, consistent, courageous and passionate
- Be open, honest, genuine and hopeful
- Believe that young people can change and are capable
- Know how to not take things personally
- Have the ability to listen and really pay attention
- Have good judgment²⁵

²³ October 2009 job description.

²⁴ Roca participants, focus groups, February and March 2009.

²⁵ Roca youth workers and program manager, personal interviews, March 2009.

To enable youth workers adequate time for outreach, program delivery and relationship building, the organization has set its caseload sizes at one youth worker to 25 participants. On November 8, 2009, the average caseload size was one worker to 21 participants.²⁷

In addition to the specific youth worker caseloads, there are also 39 young people who are assigned to the “Jail Program.” These young people are placed in jail program status when incarcerated for a period of less than five years (if they are sentenced to a longer period of time, they are dismissed from Roca); they are not on a worker’s caseload but are also not dismissed from Roca. Staff contact with those in the jail program is not currently recorded in ETO, nor is attendance in groups run at one correctional facility. For this reason, it is not currently possible to determine the level of interaction that occurs during incarceration. Roca is resolving this issue by providing youth workers access to the ETO records of participants in the jail program so that contacts and attendance to programs can be entered into the database.

Youth Worker Caseloads²⁶	
Worker	Caseload
Bernice R	19
Catherine S	19
Chianta M	28
Christine K	18
Diego P	26
Eloisa M	17
Emily T	15
Ignacia T	32
Inalvis S	19
James D	26
Jorge O	13
Jose D	21
Karen L	21
Luis C	25
Maria Jose V	16
Marta G	22
Merari T	19
Michael H	29
Nivia O	18
Paola R	23
Reggie L	20
Rolflyn C	24
Tha T	28
Average Caseload Size	22

Program managers carry caseloads and are included in the caseload chart above. Program Managers are senior youth workers who have also demonstrated leadership and program administration skills. They carry additional responsibilities, including some supervision of staff.

Coordinators supervise program managers and youth workers. The primary intent of this position is planning and coordination of resources, and staff supervision and coaching. The intent is for coordinators not to have caseloads, however, two of the four transformational relationships coordinators do have a small caseload of young people.²⁸

²⁶ Caseloads as of 11/8/09.

²⁷ 39 participants are on the “Jail Program” caseload.

²⁸ It is not possible at the time of the writing of this report to determine the caseload of one coordinator due to the need to dismiss a set of participants who are appearing on her caseload in ETO (data entry delay).

Those in **senior management** are the organization's strategic planners in terms of development, fiscal management, performance measurement, evaluation, and model development and implementation.

With the focus on education and employment, Roca employs a **GED technician** to deliver and coordinate GED programming, and the far right section of the organizational chart shows the structure of the **transitional employment program**. This program is structured similar to other parts of Roca, except that the crew supervisors are not youth workers.

FUNDING

Annually, Roca commits approximately \$6.5 million to implementing the High Risk Youth Intervention Model. It is estimated that the model costs approximately **\$5,000 per participant per year**²⁹. Once the outcome evaluation begins and more is known about what results from the intervention model, a cost-benefit examination is planned.

Roca has an aggressive fundraising strategy to support its work. While this strategy is implemented through its Development office, staff at all levels are expected to participate.

REFERRAL SOURCES

Roca's program coordinators report that the majority of participant referrals come from youth workers, family members, schools, probation, health care organizations (particularly in the program that serves young parents), and youth self-referrals through word of mouth (friends and family members). It is not possible at this time to verify with certainty that these are in fact the primary referral sources because, for example, 45 percent of the participants enrolled in FY2009 (157 of 351) had missing referral source records in ETO. An additional 23 percent (81 of 351) were categorized as "Other" without adequate information to ascertain the source. The following table shows the known referral sources³⁰ for participants enrolled in FY2009. The greatest numbers of referrals come from health care providers, the courts, schools, and governmental agencies.

²⁹ Anisha Chablani, personal interview, 12 November 2009. This figure does not include wages for participants involved in the transitional employment program.

³⁰ Numbers presented exclude missing referral sources and those in the "Other" category.

Referral Sources for Participants Enrolled July 2008 to June 2009		
Referral Source	Number	Percent
Courts	15	13%
Area Hospitals/Clinics	15	13%
School Personnel	14	12%
Department of Transitional Assistance	12	11%
Department of Children and Families	11	10%
Self	10	9%
Youth Worker Referral	10	9%
Probation	8	7%
Other Community Organizations	7	6%
Friend	6	5%
Family Member	3	3%
Department of Youth Services	2	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>100%</i>

The issue of missing referral information will be addressed by a new version of the Central Intake form introduced in fall 2009. Referral and demographic information will be monitored for completeness moving forward. After a few months of accurate and complete recording of referral sources, a sample of sources will be interviewed to determine the decision making process involved in making a referral to Roca versus not making the referral. The interview protocol is shown in Appendix A. These interviews are important because there is disagreement within Roca as to how well the referral sources know Roca's eligibility criteria. One of the program coordinators believes that organizations send appropriate referrals (referrals who fall within the eligibility criteria) because "Roca's been in the community for so long, it's clear what we do...we don't have A students coming in."³¹ Another coordinator feels that inappropriate referrals (e.g., 12 to 13 year olds) still come in despite consistent efforts to educate personnel from referring organizations. Part of the coordinator role is to commit time to educating organizations on which students, clients or other young people to refer; they do this via tours of Roca's facility, other in-person contact, or personal phone calls³².

It is important to note that the referrals Roca receives are not traditional referrals in the sense that the referral source provides details about the young person or where the referral source introduces the young person to a youth worker or other intake staff. Oftentimes, the police will tell Roca they have a

³¹ Roca coordinator, Personal Interview, 26 May 2009,

³² Roca coordinators, Personal Interviews, 26 May 2009, 29 June 2009, and 2 July 2009.

young person who falls into the organization's target group and give Roca the name and say who the young person hangs out with. Or, the school will call with a referral for a truant student and Roca is expected to go find the young person. The court may make a referral and provide Roca with the name and next court date. So, referrals are made and youth workers spend time finding and beginning to build a relationship with young people they often know little to nothing about.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Roca sees its partners in the community as part of the set of resources necessary to implement the High Risk Youth Intervention Model. They can be organizations, institutions or individuals and are engaged for the purposes of addressing issues impacting outcomes for young people and planning together in support of better outcomes.

There are three levels of partners:

1. **Individual community partners** are directly involved in the lives of the young people Roca serves, such as case workers, probation officers, teachers and police officers. They communicate information about individual young people.
2. **Organizational community partners** engage with Roca on projects (formally or informally), share resources (e.g., space), or advise Roca. These are entities that have a common interest in and/or investment in positively impacting young people.
3. **Institutions** partner with Roca to change how systems interact with young people and with each other, and to advocate for policy and practice changes that will positively impact and support young people.

Roca's primary partners include:

- *Courts/Law Enforcement:* Chelsea Police Department, East Boston Police Department, Revere Police Department; Department of Youth Services, Probation, Parole, Chelsea District Court, Federal District Court, Suffolk House of Correction;
- *State Social Service and Other Agencies:* Department of Children and Families, Department of Revenue, Department of Transition Assistance;
- *Health Providers:* Massachusetts General Hospital, North Suffolk Mental Health, detoxification centers;
- *Schools:* Phoenix Charter School, Chelsea High School; and,
- *Municipalities:* City of Chelsea

Many of Roca's young people are tied into various systems such as the Department of Youth Services, Probation, and Department of Children and Families, so Roca builds "relationships with adults who are attached to institutions attached to young people."³³ Much like a youth worker is assigned to a participant, a particular staff person or executive leader within Roca is responsible for, or assigned to, building and maintaining certain institutional relationships. Oftentimes, there is a designated back up person for each relationship with partners as well. Because these partnerships are about relationships, Roca applies the stages of change to this work. Much time and effort is spent in building trust with partners. This is done through transparency, honesty about motives and mistakes, and frequent interaction.

FACILITY AND OTHER PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Roca operates in a 2-story, 19,898 square foot building in Chelsea. The ground level of the building provides space for a common area, basketball court (which is also used to hold large events), weight room, cosmetology room, woodshop, clinic space, and front desk area. Two of the four coordinators have office space on the ground floor and youth workers share office space on this floor as well, and the Transitional Employment Program office is located on this floor.

The top floor provides office space for management, development staff, human resources, and accounting in an administrative area. Two program coordinators also have offices upstairs, as do other programs operated by Roca, such as Youth Star (AmeriCorps). This second floor provides classroom space for education and other programming (e.g., peacemaking circles and other groups). In addition, the second floor houses a computer lab, meeting space, full kitchen, and music room.

While Roca has a large space in which to operate, a facility of this size is not considered necessary in order to implement the High Risk Youth Intervention Model. The availability of certain types of spaces is more important, that is, space to deliver programming. This could be owned space, rented space (e.g., rented time in a computer lab or local gymnasium), or space provided by a community partner. It is still not known exactly what space is essential to the delivery of the intervention model. A replication currently underway in Springfield, MA will help in this determination.

³³ Anisha Chablani, Personal Interview 2 June 2009.

In addition to space, other physical resources are important. These are shown in the following table.

Other Physical Resources	
Equipment	Why Essential to the Model?
Vans	Staff need access to vans for performing outreach and for transporting participants and work crews
Cellular telephones	Staff must be accessible to young people through phone and text messaging
Computers and internet connection	Staff must record their contacts with young people and attendance to programming so that processes can be tracked and outcomes measured
Program supplies	Curricula and other supplies are needed for program delivery
Work crew equipment	Transitional employment work crews need to have tools to perform work (e.g., shovels, rakes, gloves)

ADVISORS

Roca strategically identifies expert advisors and engages with them. While the primary purpose for doing this is to inform its work with young people, there are others reasons as well.

- **Adaptation/applicability of research:** Oftentimes available research on best practices and what works is not 100 percent applicable to the populations Roca serves. Roca engages the authors of the research to adapt the findings to Roca’s high risk youth population.
- **Attention on high risk young people:** Engagement of researchers provides an opportunity to get those in various fields to pay attention to the high-risk populations that are often understudied and not written about in the research literature.
- **Learning:** Roca has the desire to get better at working with young people so experts are brought in to help frame organizational practices.
- **Educating partners:** Experts are brought in to train or otherwise educate community partners because they can add validity to Roca’s work.
- **Tapping into resources:** Working with highly regarded individuals and organizations can provide funding opportunities that otherwise might not be available.

EFFORTS TO OUTCOMES

Efforts to Outcomes, or ETO, is software developed by Social Solutions. ETO is a customizable, web-based application that collects organizational efforts (activities) for the purpose of monitoring performance and linking the efforts (relationship and programming activities) to client outcomes. ETO is managed by a 0.5 FTE (half of the Evaluation and IT Coordinator’s time). A 0.25 FTE is also allocated to ETO data entry. Currently, the organization has 74 individual user licenses, as all staff have user accounts and is required to document their activities in ETO.

The table below outlines the data collected in ETO.

Sites within ETO	
Site	Types of Information Collected
Central Intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participant demographics, referral sources – Participant contact information – Target group(s) and other baseline information
Transformational Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Efforts to contact and actual contacts between youth workers and participants (including time spent, location, and stage of change for each contact) – Attendance to life skills programming (by type of program) and pre-employment/job readiness programming (considered employment programming) – Quarterly participant reports – Phase 2 participant assessments
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attendance to educational and pre-vocational programming (by type of program) and financial literacy courses (which are considered life skills programs)
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transitional employment hours worked – Termination and Rehire meetings conducted – Job placements, retention, and advancements
TR3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Efforts and contacts between youth workers and participants who are in phase 3 (including time spent, location, and stage of change for each contact)

It is the combination of the human and physical resources discussed in this section which allows Roca to implement both organizational and client-level strategies.

ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL STRATEGIES

The strategies involved in the delivery of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model occur at two levels, organizational and client. This section will explain the organizational level strategies: training staff; identifying and serving the target population, engaged institutions and measurement of processes. The outputs associated with each strategy are identified here as well.

TRAIN STAFF

Training of staff to deliver the High Risk Youth Intervention Model occurs in a variety of ways: formal training, job shadowing for new staff, an expectation of learning from co-workers, coaching and staff supervision.

All staff are required to attend **formal training** in four areas, with additional trainings available to staff on an ongoing, as needed basis. Per Roca staff, it is ideal if the core trainings in the table below are completed as soon as possible upon hiring, but there are no definitive timeframes for completion in policy or procedure.

Required Training			
Training	Purpose	Duration/Frequency	Training Reinforcement/ Review
High Risk Youth Intervention Model Training	To train staff on the High Risk Youth Intervention, with a focus on how Roca works with its young people (e.g., use of stages of change, relentless outreach and follow up)	2-3 sessions, total of 6 hours for new staff	Reinforcement occurs during monthly all-staff meetings, team meetings, and weekly supervision.
Motivational Interviewing	To teach staff how to use motivational interviewing as a strategy for engaging young person in the change process	2-3 sessions, total of 6 hours for new staff	Reinforcement occurs during monthly all-staff meetings and team meetings; some individuals receive one-on-one coaching as well.
Peacemaking Circles	To teach staff to conduct Circles to engage young people and others within the community in the change process through communication, understanding, conflict resolution, and/or accountability	3-4 day training for new staff	Offered as needed

Required Training			
Training	Purpose	Duration/Frequency	Training Reinforcement/ Review
Efforts to Outcomes Software Training	To teach staff how to input data accurately into ETO.	1 ½ to 2-hour initial training	Reinforcement training occurs during monthly all-staff meetings and team meetings as needed. One-on-one training is also provided as needed.

All staff receive training in CPR, adolescent development issues (e.g., trauma, substance abuse, suicide, and depression), stages of change and model reinforcement. Coordinators also make efforts to provide educational opportunities to staff through external providers in areas such as substance abuse, parenting, violence prevention, workforce development, adolescent development, trauma, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy prevention, and restorative justice, among others. Supplemental trainings are informally identified via external email listserv notifications, interaction with external contacts who inform on upcoming trainings, and individual youth workers who express a need to attend a particular training.

Some funders also require additional training. For example, the staff responsible for delivering the Healthy Families program with young parents is required to participate in 100 hours of trainings offered through the Children’s Trust Fund. Trainings are offered once every three to four months and include topics such as child abuse and neglect, toddler and infant development, culture and parenting, and mental health, among others.

There is currently no formal, standardized method to maintain records of attendance to trainings. Coordinators have addressed this by maintaining records of their own, such as keeping a training notebook.

Job shadowing appears to be the primary way in which new staff learn to perform outreach. New hires will ride along and spend time with more experienced youth workers to learn different approaches to engaging young people, such as how to approach young people and how to figure out their interests as a way to engage them. Job shadowing typically lasts two to three weeks.

The organization is set up to support and facilitate the process of **youth workers learning from each other**. Youth workers are encouraged to perform outreach in pairs and are all grouped into teams. The teams have daily check-ins around day-to-day operations and meet for weekly team meetings as

well. The team meetings are a forum for program and group planning and coaching around the delivery of the model.

Roca has an ongoing process of **coaching**. It occurs at two levels: coaching from the Deputy Director to coordinators and from coordinators to line staff. Coaching is intended to re-emphasize the components of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model and how to deliver them as designed. Coaching occurs during individual weekly supervision at both the coordinator and youth worker level as well as during monthly all-staff meetings.

Coaching is also provided in Motivational Interviewing techniques via an external consultant. The consultant attends monthly all-staff meetings to speak to staff, coaches youth worker teams during one-hour sessions at monthly team meetings, and conducts one-on-one sessions with individuals.

Staff supervision acts as the primary interface between the levels of Roca's staffing structure. Historically, supervision between the Deputy Director and coordinators has not centered on professional development, but is "more about programming, problem-solving, and coaching."³⁴ Currently, Roca's Deputy Director engages all Coordinators in weekly one-hour individual sessions and weekly one to two-hour group supervision.

Coordinators hold weekly individual one-hour supervision sessions with all youth workers. The exception is for youth workers who are associated with the Healthy Families program; they have weekly individual supervision sessions lasting 1.5 hours. The content of each coordinator-youth worker supervision session varies in delivery style, leadership approaches, and team dynamics,³⁵ but can include the following:

- Checking in with the youth worker about how they are feeling, concerns, discussing recent events;
- Review of caseloads and progress of work with young people;
- Coaching around how to address participant-specific issues;
- Review of programming responsibilities; and
- Discussing staff development, such as training or other resources needed.

All supervision sessions are documented; however, there are no centralized, systematic way to record dates and content of the sessions. Roca's senior management is in the process of developing a formalized supervision outline and staff development plan. The supervision outline will include

³⁴ Roca coordinator, Personal Interview, 5 June 5, 2009.

³⁵ Roca coordinators, Personal correspondence, 26 May 2009, 29 June 2009, and 2 July 2009.

reviews of participant-youth worker contacts, percentage of caseload attending programming, and case review to understand staff thinking around stages of change, for example. There are also plans to revamp the staff development section in ETO so that staff development and supervision can be uniformly recorded. This will be especially helpful given that training is considered “fluid” because, rather than a large set of required formal trainings, much of training is “covered during supervision.”³⁶

The results of the various training methods used by Roca are intended to enhance development of competency in six areas:

- Knowledge of the work
- Use of self
- Roca’s strategic methods
- Driving to outcomes
- Professional job skills
- Management skills and responsibilities

The table which follows lists the competency areas and indicators for each.

Competency Areas	Indicators
Knowledge of the work	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – practice, live, and promote the vision, mission, values, and theory of change – engage in and promote Roca’s model – integrate and use the medicine wheel – “be the change” – represent and support Roca’s commitment to disconnected and disengaged young people in the larger social and political context
Use of self	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lead and model intentionally with hope and possibility – invest personal energy without taking things personally – be mindful of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in ourselves and others – be 100% transparent and accountable in striving toward excellence
Strategic methods	<i>Street Work and Outreach:</i>
	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – perform outreach, street work and follow up – identify potential and critical community and street issues affecting young people – strategically intervene in crisis
	<i>Transformational Relationships:</i>
	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use the stages of change for intentional and strategic work toward outcomes – engage young people in the phases of transformational relationships – use motivational interviewing strategies and skills – maintain appropriate support and challenge balance with young people (no enabling) – help young people have healthy relationships with other adults

³⁶ Roca coordinator, Personal Interview, 6 June 2009.

Competency Areas	Indicators
	<p><i>Peacemaking Circles:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – apply fundamental principles of peacemaking circle process – plan for and keep specific and appropriate circles with participants – use circles effectively in work with young people and others <p><i>Opportunities for Life Skills, Education, Employment:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – engage young people in stage appropriate programming – develop and implement activities and programming appropriate to Roca’s target groups – evaluate and improve programming <p><i>Life Skills:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deliver life skills curriculum and programming – help young people identify and access resources – help young people manage and negotiate life responsibilities and obligations <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – re-engage young people in a learning process – support the delivery of quality stage appropriate educational programming – help young people manage and negotiate life responsibilities and obligations – encourage and foster leadership <p><i>Employment:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – re-engage young people in stage appropriate employment programming – model and promote a culture of work with young people for job readiness – support transitional employment/job placement and retention – track and evaluate job readiness and celebrate retention and advancements – coach and supervise young people in employment programming/positions – develop and maintain relationships with employers <p><i>Engaged Institutions:</i></p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand EI strategy for formal and informal practice and policy change – build key relationships and work with community partners to support young people
Driving to Outcomes	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – record and track progress in ETO – manage data entry in real time accurately and efficiently – use data and reports to plan strategically and appropriately – manage and organize work through use of ETO – use data and reports as a feedback and ongoing development tool with others – use outside evaluator process reports for program improvement
Professional Job Skills	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – manage time effectively – adhere to agency policies and procedures – develop work plans for overall scope of work – display strong written and verbal communication skills – display strong interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively with others internally and externally – ask for help – complete all records and paperwork accurately and on time – facilitate effective meetings – think critically from a systems perspective

Competency Areas	Indicators
Management Skills and Responsibilities (Coordinator) ³⁷	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plan work and fill jobs – motivate, coach, supervise, and develop staff – measure the work of staff through a performance-based management system – shift work from doing the work to getting the work done through others

The output of staff training is the number and percent of staff fully trained. Because the completion of required trainings, job shadow hours, coaching hours and supervision content are not tracked in ETO, the evaluation will implement a tracking form with new hires (or very recent hires) moving forward. This form will be discontinued as relevant data elements are added into ETO’s staff development site. The elements of the tracking form are shown in Appendix B. This data collection, in addition to determining the proportion staff fully trained, is intended to determine how much effort is involved in training staff and how long it takes to train them. In other words, more data is needed to document the strategy itself and the outputs.

³⁷ There are management skills and responsibilities competencies for the Director, Organizational Director, Executive Director and Board as well.

IDENTIFY AND SERVE TARGET POPULATION

Roca serves participants who meet age, target group and readiness criteria. The specific criteria are shown in the box to the right.

As discussed previously, participants are referred to Roca in numerous ways, including self-referrals, friends, family members, court and law enforcement agencies, social service and education providers, and medical personal.

When a referral comes to Roca, youth workers make an initial assessment as to their eligibility. If the young person *appears* to meet the criteria, the youth worker completes an intake form and reviews it with a coordinator. It is the completion of this form and its entry into ETO which officially enrolls the participant. The youth worker and coordinator continue to assess fit for Roca's intervention over the subsequent 45 days. It is within this timeframe that a final decision is made as to whether or not a young person is eligible and a good match with Roca's interventions. The reasons why a young person may be *ineligible* in the 45-day period are:

- *Does not need a Transformational Relationship*: the participant is ready, willing or able to participate in programming elsewhere (not at Roca)
- *Not in geographic area*: the participant lives in an area that is not readily accessible to youth workers or has moved away from Roca's service area
- *Not in target population*: the participant does not fall into one of the six target groups or within the age criteria
- *Unable to engage in TR*: the youth worker is unable to access participant to build a productive, safe long-term relationship at that point in time (e.g., participant is sentenced to incarceration for five years or more)

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Age 14 to 24 at enrollment
2. Involved in extreme criminal or antisocial behaviors or extremely isolated, as demonstrated by falling into one or more of the following groups:
 - Involved with a gang and/or involved in street life
 - Involved with the Court or other public systems
 - On the verge of dropping out of school
 - Dropped out of school
 - Is him or herself a young parent
 - Is a refugee or immigrant
3. In pre-contemplation or contemplation about living a healthy and/or productive life

- *Unable to find/locate*: the youth worker has exhausted all efforts to find and contact the participant (e.g., contact information provided is incorrect)
- *Unable to provide services*: Roca is not able to meet the needs of the participant (e.g., a participant is cognitively not able to participate in Roca’s offerings)

This process of eligibility determination was implemented towards the end of FY2008. In the most recent fiscal year, 52 (15%) of those enrolled were deemed ineligible.

Enrollments			
Year	Number Enrolled	Number Ineligible	Percent Ineligible
FY2009	351	52	14.8

Reasons for Ineligibility in FY2009		
Dismissal Reason	Number	Percent
Ineligible - Unable to find/contact	21	40.4
Ineligible - Does not need TR	8	15.4
Ineligible - Not in geographic area	8	15.4
Ineligible - Not in target population	8	15.4
Ineligible - Unable to engage in TR	4	7.7
Ineligible - Unable to provide services	3	5.8

Of the 299 FY2009 enrollments who were determined to be *eligible*, nine fell outside the age criteria (under age 14 or over age 24) and 13³⁸ were not in any of the six target groups (one of which also fell outside the age criteria). These data reveal an issue that needs to be addressed before ETO data is used in analyses for the evaluation. There is a small subset of Roca participants who Roca has enrolled knowing they do not necessarily meet the criteria. Most of these participants are young people who have been involved with Roca for many years, prior to the formalization of the model. Roca continues to serve them although they may not meet the eligibility criteria and have had exposure to intervention that looks different than the High Risk Youth Intervention model of today. Roca and evaluators are working to identify these individuals within ETO so they can be examined separate from the participants enrolled in the High Risk Youth Intervention. Also, moving forward, interviews will be conducted with youth workers and/or coordinators to understand why young people who fall outside the eligibility criteria are accepted as participants.

³⁸ Only 277 of the 299 eligible enrollments had target group information recorded in ETO.

The outputs or products of implementing a strategy to identify and serve a target population are the number and percent of eligible participants enrolled and served over time and the number and percent of participants not in the targeted population who are enrolled and served over time.

ENGAGE INSTITUTIONS

In a February 2006 paper entitled, “Encircling Institutions: Surrounding youth in crisis with mutual engagement, commitment and trust,” Wendy Wheeler of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development articulated the purpose and outcomes of the Engaged Institutions Strategy.

“The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the systems and institutions contribute to young people’s self-sufficiency and help them to be out of harm’s way. Roca’s work with institutions is focused to three outcomes: increasing the ability of institutions to 1) understand and be more responsive to youth needs, 2) be accountable for the services that they provide and 3) understand the impact they are having on young people’s lives. Roca does this by being in relationship and partnership with the other institutions — at both the institutional and staff levels, promoting the opportunity for human development among Roca staff and their colleagues in the other agencies; at the organizational level through mutual engagement of organizational systems and supports; and at the community and policy level by strengthening public will and support for the work of the partner agency and most importantly for those they serve, the young people and their families.”³⁹

The processes involved with implementing Engaged Institutions mirror those used to engage individual young people. The strategy is marked by an investment in building trusting relationships no matter how long it takes, frequent, consistent, honest communication between Roca staff and staff within the institutions or organizations, and the use of peacemaking circles to hear and understand each other and the young people.

Roca has implemented the Engaged Institutions strategy formally since 2005 without corresponding data collection to track the efforts involved or the results. Rather than collect data retroactively, the evaluation will track the strategy as it is newly implemented as part of the replication of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model in Springfield, MA. The tracking form is shown in Appendix C. It will be completed via monthly meetings with Roca’s Executive Director initially and others as the replication proceeds. The purpose is to determine what changes in procedure, policy and practices result.

³⁹ Wheeler, W., (2006). *Encircling Institutions: Surrounding youth in crisis with mutual engagement, commitment and trust*. Tacoma Park, MD, 11.

MEASURE PROCESSES

All staff who works with participants are required to enter client-level data into ETO. This data includes interactions with participants, participant attendance in life skills, education and employment programming, job development efforts, job placements, service plans, quarterly participant updates, and participant assessments. Roca has a number of reports available in ETO that it uses currently to determine if the organization, the programs, and the staff are engaging participants as they should be in relationships (e.g., reports that display contacts and stages of change progression for individual participants). These reports are used by senior management to identify areas where coaching is needed and by middle management in weekly supervision to discuss participant progress and staff performance.

Over the last year, Roca has established a set of performance measures and targets. Roca staff and the evaluation team have designed a series of performance measurement reports to be used on a monthly and quarterly basis to track performance of the whole organization, the programs within the organization and individual staff. The programming and rollout of these reports will occur in fall 2009 and continue through the winter.

Performance Reports		
Topic	Measures	Available at Which Levels?
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Average weekly efforts to contact and actual contacts per participant – Percent attending programming 	Management Program Staff
School Performance (in-school youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Percent with unexcused absences – Percent with school suspensions 	Management Program Staff
Educational Engagement (out-of-school youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Percent engaged in educational programming – Number obtaining a GED 	Management Program
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Percent of phase 2 participants completing financial literacy – Percent engaged in pre-voc and employment programming – Number earning a pre-voc certificate – Number completing transitional employment and assessed as ready for work – Number of job placements – Job retention 	Management Program

Performance Reports		
Topic	Measures	Available at Which Levels?
Living Out of Harm's Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of referrals made and accessed – Number with new criminal charges and violations – Number with new pregnancies 	Management Program

Over the course of the remainder of FY2010, the evaluation will examine the implementation and uses of the performance measurement reports and any practice changes that result.

CLIENT-LEVEL STRATEGIES

In addition to the organizational level strategies Roca employs, there is a core set of client-level strategies that are used in the High Risk Youth Intervention Model. These are the efforts involved in developing and building transformational relationships, and life skills, educational, and employment programming.

RELENTLESS EFFORTS TO BUILD AND DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS

Roca uses what it calls **relentless outreach and follow-up** to build and strengthen staff relationships with participants, the relationships known as transformational relationships.

As mentioned in a previous section, the main tactic involved in transformational relationships is **frequent and consistent contact** with participants. The **contact is to occur two to three times per week, every week, over a number of years** (ideally 3). At different times within the relationship, participants may avoid contact with their youth workers, or be in various living arrangements (e.g., homeless) or circumstances (e.g., high on drugs) that pose challenges to contact. For this reason, youth workers are expected to have to make many efforts to find or reach participants.

The efforts to contact and actual contacts must occur when the participant wants or needs them to occur and when they do not want them to. Youth workers are expected to **keep showing up in the lives of young people whether they want them to or not**. This requires often going to the young person on the street, to school, to a shelter, or to their home. It means going to court or doctors' appointments with them. It means advocating for them with the systems they are involved with. It means picking them up and driving them to events at Roca or going to find them when they fail to show up for a group or program. Showing up can mean going to a party on a Friday night to get them out of a dangerous situation. It is the repetition of the contact and involvement in the lives of young people that builds trust. They see that the youth worker is there for them when they are making positive choices for themselves, when they continue harmful behaviors or experience setbacks, and even when they reject the youth worker's involvement. Eventually they come to trust the worker and feel worthy of their time and attention.

Relentless outreach requires the youth worker to **learn about and listen to the participant**. Not only does this allow the worker to know where to find the participant, but it provides insights into what interests them. It is these interests that can be used over time to engage him or her. Getting to know the young person and the people in their lives also allows the youth worker to represent their interests

and to be aware of potentially harmful situations they may be in or put themselves in (and to take them out of those situations, when possible, until they are able to do that for themselves).

Relentless youth work **looks like parenting at times**. Youth workers hold participants accountable when no one else is doing it, ask them questions so they can think things through themselves, help to keep them physically safe, tell them the truth about situations they put themselves in, show them how to do something they have not learned how to do, educate them on their options, support their positive choices and support them when they have not made positive choices.

The point of relentless outreach is the development of a relationship that is strong enough so that when young people are challenged by the youth worker and get defensive or angry, they will, at some point come back and will recognize why the worker challenged them. It is in these times when significant awareness, learning and progress tend to occur.

The outputs of the implementation of the relentless efforts to build and deepen relationships are seen generally through the efforts and contacts with young people and progression through and retention in the intervention. The questions around efforts and contacts are: Are youth workers having contact a minimum of two times per week? Are the two contacts per week occurring consistently each week? What is the ratio of efforts to contacts? In other words, how many efforts does it take on average to make contact? Do youth initiate a greater proportion of contacts the longer they are involved with Roca?

Progression through the phases of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model and retention in the model are also products of the youth workers relationship building. Until recently, progression was difficult to measure because there were not documented criteria guiding movement from one phase to the next. In summer 2009, however, Roca implemented a set of conditions that must now be met in order to move a participant into phase 2. These conditions are as follows:

Criteria to Move to Phase 2

- Youth worker has introduced the participant to the coordinator
- Participant is able to complete the Phase 2 participant assessment honestly
- Participant has experienced a relapse (within the stages of change) in the Phase I relationship and has recovered
- Participant has been enrolled a minimum of four months

Similarly, Roca established criteria for graduating participants to phase 3. Those criteria are shown in the text box below. When assessing fidelity to the model over the next several months, new movements to phase 2 and new graduations to phase 3 will be compared with the specified criteria and also assessed as to how long it took to reach the benchmarks.

Criteria to Graduate to Phase 3

- Youth worker and participant can identify positive relationships between the participant and his or her peers and between the participant and at least one adult outside of Roca
- Participant has not been arrested in the last 6 to 9 months
- Participant is at low risk of getting or getting someone pregnant
- Participant has earned a diploma or is on track to graduate (in-school youth)
- Participant (a) has retained unsubsidized employment for 6 months or (b) is enrolled in and has retained enrollment in a formal vocational training program (out-of-school youth)

The other outputs to be examined include the length of time in phase 1, the number and percent dismissed during phase each phase, the number and percent moving and not moving to phase 2 within one year, and the number and percent who graduate out of phase 2 within three years of enrollment.

LIFE SKILLS AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

The youth worker-participant relationship is a vehicle to encourage and retain participation in programming to provide opportunities for learning skills and practicing behaviors to stay safe and to be self-sufficient. Roca's life skills and engagement programming provides opportunities for learning concrete skills (e.g., financial literacy, parenting) and for social and emotional learning in the areas of emotional literacy, decision making, self management, relationship skills, and social awareness. The social and emotional skills are considered by Roca to be particularly instrumental in achieving the out of harm's way outcomes (decreased arrests and no new pregnancies).

Roca’s life skills and engagement programming falls into the eight categories shown in the table below.

Life Skills Programming	FY2008 and 2009 Topics ⁴⁰
Financial Literacy	Classes, guest speakers on financial literacy
Arts/Creative Expression	Theater, jewelry making, play groups for parents and children, disc jockey class
Circles	Young women’s group, young father’s group, domestic violence, smoking and pregnancy, “what’s in a name ?” support group, children’s temper tantrums, substance abuse group, Alcoholics Anonymous, relationship building, Power Source, immigration, leadership
Emotional Wellbeing	Counseling, leadership group, family drop-in immigration group, STD/HIV group, young parents group, parent support group, domestic violence group, play group (with children), positive discipline, raising a reader (for parents), family planning, adolescent substance abuse, stress reduction, Phoenix Charter Academy School group, prenatal group, Power Source, immigrant rights, budgeting, open discussion on DTA benefits, healthy relationships, Young Leadership Corps group, self-esteem, role concepts, parenting education, GLBT group, girls group, young moms rowing team, controlling anger, employment support group, fathers group, young men’s group, pro-immigrant group, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous,
Field Trips	Apple picking, paint ball, bowling, Children’s Museum, Revere Beach, Lake Cochituate, Museum of Science, movies, dinner at restaurants, college trips
Physical Engagement	Baseball, basketball (including clinics and leagues), bowling, dance (class and group), soccer, flag football, open gym, yoga, girls’ workout, karate, men’s fitness, men’s power lifting, rowing (practice and regatta), taekwondo, theater
Organizing Activities	Arts café, family planning birth control, pro-immigrant group, rowing team, TOP, Teen Lobby Day, voter registration, organizing International Day
Special Events	AIDs Walk, barbeque, Christmas party, girls group dinner, graduation, Martin Luther King Day event, Mother’s Day event, participant movie trip, taco night, talent show, toddler group, video game tournament, Women’s International Day

Some of the activities seem to be strictly about engagement, with little focus on skill development. This will need to be examined further as ETO data collection does not differentiate between life skills programs and activities that are focused on engagement. The FY2010 summer schedules on the following page shows that a distinction is now being made programmatically, but data continue to be collected by the general categories above.

⁴⁰ Topics were attained through reading notes entered for life skills attendance.

FY10 Summer Schedule: Life Skills Programming

Name of Group	Day	Time	Target Group
AA meeting	Saturday	10:00-11:00	any soc with SA issues
Drop in Powersource	Tuesdays	4:30-6	contemplation/planning
Drop in Substance Abuse group	Thursday	4:00-6:00	any soc with SA issues
Father's Group	Wednesdays	12:30-2	Young Fathers any Stage of Change (SOC)
Father's Group	Thursday	5:00-7:00	Young Fathers any SOC
GLBT	Mondays	5:30-7	to be determined by group members
Grupo de los Padres	Mondays	5:30-7	Spanish speaking parents - any SOC
Leadership group	Mondays	6:00-8:00	Participants sustaining in their SOC
Men's Powersource 10x	Wednesdays	6:00-8:00	Young Men contemplation - sustaining
Narcotics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:00-9:00	any soc with SA issues
Parenting Powersource 10x	Thursday	10:30-11:30	young parents action/sustaining
Playgroup	Tuesdays	5:00-7:00	Parents and their children any SOC
Young Men's Group	Tuesdays	5:30-7:00	young men any SOC
Young Women's Group	Tuesdays	5:30-7	young women any SOC

FY10 Summer Schedule: Engagement Programming

Name of Group	Day	Time	Target Group
Basketball drills	Thursday	3:00-5:00	any SOC
Basketball League	Thursday	5:00-9:00	any SOC
Clothing Design 10x	Thursday	10:00-12:00	any SOC
Driver's Permit prep classes 4x	Friday	4:00-6:00	planning-sustaining
Drop in Scrapbooking	Friday	3:00-5:00	any SOC
Men's Fitness	M, TH	5:30-8	Young Men any SOC
Rowing Team	M, W	3:30-5:30	Young Mothers any SOC
Soccer	Friday	7:00-9:00	any SOC
Soccer	Mondays	6:00-9:00	any SOC
Vocational Arts Class	Mondays	9:00-12:00	any SOC
Vocational Arts Class	Wednesday	3:00-5:00	any SOC
Women's fitness	Wednesday	5:30-8	any SOC

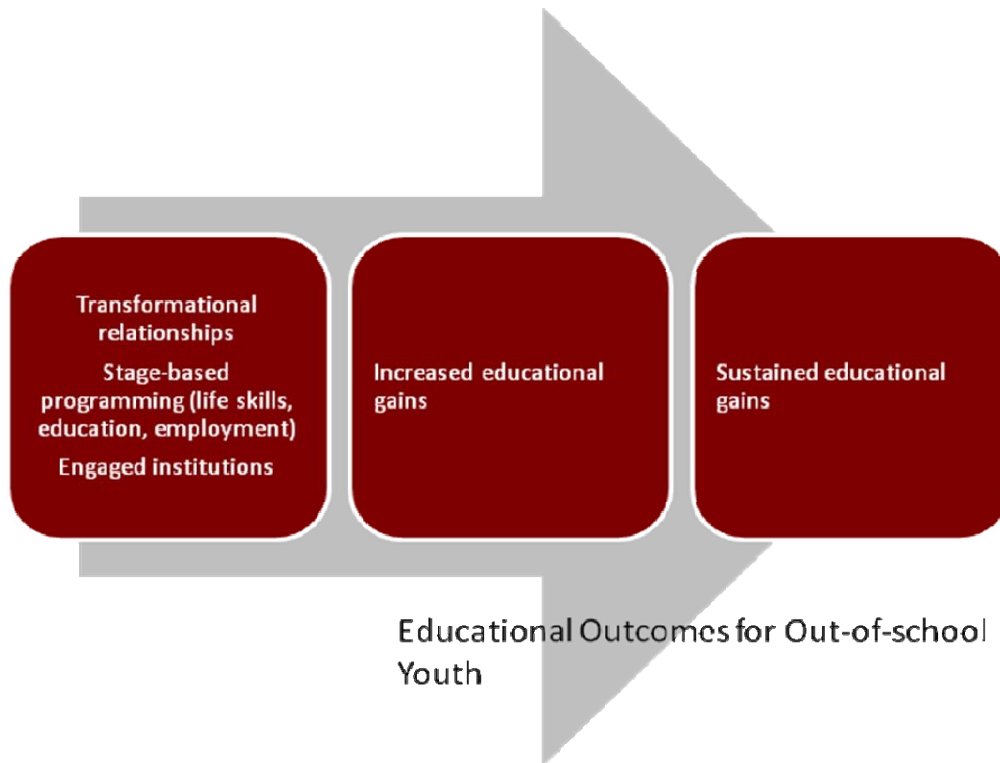
As shown in the target group column of the schedules, life skills and engagement programming are intended to be implemented with young people according to their readiness for participation and readiness to address certain issues (stage-based programming). It is not possible using ETO data to determine whether life skills programming is, in fact, implemented this way. Again, attendance is recorded by general category and by not class name, therefore, attendance records cannot be linked to the classes' targeted stage(s) of change.

The output associated with life skills and engagement programming is participation. How many and what percent of participants participate in this programming? How long does it take them to participate? What is the extent of their participation? Roca has defined participation as attending two to three life skills or engagement programs or activities each month. What proportion of the population meets these criteria?

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The primary purpose of Roca's educational programming is to increase engagement in education to increase the likelihood of future economic independence. Roca's educational programming is intended primarily for those participants who have dropped out of school. For the in-school population, the outcomes of increased success in school and high school graduation are often achieved through different means. Youth workers use outreach, transformational relationships and partnerships with schools and others to keep those participants in school and to increase their success there.

For those who have officially dropped out of school, the intermediate outcomes sought are increased educational gains. These gains include positive gain scores on educational assessments, passing two of five GED areas and/or achievement of an industry-accepted certification. In phase 3 (years 4 and 5) the desired outcomes are sustained educational gains (positive gain scores on educational assessments, achievement of a GED, connection to post-secondary education, and/or industry certification).



Roca’s theory is that educational programming alone is not sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes. Their achievement is expected only when programming is delivered in concert with the youth worker-participant relationship (engagement and support) and with partnerships with other institutions or organizations that can impact educational achievement of Roca’s young people.

The programs offered by Roca are shown to the right. Educational interventions are delivered using a stage-based approach. For example, Roca offers a drop-in GED class and ongoing GED classes. The drop-in GED class allows a participant in the contemplation stage, for example, to get a feel for what attending a GED class is like.

Educational Programming
Computer Basics
English as a Second Language
English for Speakers of Other Languages
GED (English and Spanish)
Pre-Voc - Carpentry
Pre-Voc - Cosmetology
Pre-Voc - Culinary Arts
Pre-Voc - Intro to Health Care
Pre-Voc - Intro to Hospitality
Pre-Voc - Ready for Work

Beginning in FY2010 ETO data allows for the different levels (based on stages of change) of educational classes to be detected as class names in ETO now specify class length and are tied to stages of change. The summer class schedule that follows 1) shows which classes are geared toward participants in the various stages of change, and 2) whether the class is drop-in or a 10-session offering (10x).

FY10 Summer Schedule: Educational Programming⁴¹			
Name of Group	Day	Time	Target Group
Basic ESOL	T,TH	7:00-9:00	Action/Sustaining
Basic ESOL	W,F	6:00-9:00	Action/Sustaining
Drop in GED	M,T,TH,F	10:30-12:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
Drop in GED	M,T,TH,F	2:30-4:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
ESOL I 10x	W,F	9:00-12:00	Action/Sustaining
GED Class	M,T,TH,F	4:30-6:00	Action/Sustaining
GED drop in and assessments	Friday	10:30-12:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
GED drop in and assessments	Friday	2:30-4:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
GED drop in and assessments	Friday	4:30-6:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
GED Tutoring	Wednesday	2:30-4:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
GED Tutoring	Wednesday	4:30-6:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
Key Project GED	Wednesday	10:30-12:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
Key Project GED	Wednesday	12:30-2:00	Contemplation/Planning/Action
Spanish GED 10x	T,TH	5:00-7:00	Action/Sustaining
Spanish GED 10x	Wednesday	6:00-8:00	Action/Sustaining

The output associated with the implementation of educational programming is attendance. The questions are the same as for life skills programming. How many and what percent of participants participate in educational programming? How long does it take them to initiate participation? What is the extent of their participation? What proportion of the population is attending at least twice per month?

⁴¹ Youth workers can also bring pre-contemplators into drop-in classes so they can experience the classes.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMING AND OPPORTUNITIES

Employment is at the heart of Roca’s work with high risk young people. Getting participants ready for work is the “end game.” If they are ready to work, they are more likely to be economically independent. Also, “ready for work” means that they have addressed other issues that pose barriers to employment, such as substance abuse.

Roca’s employment programming provides opportunities to learn, practice, and fully implement the soft and hard skills necessary to obtain and, more importantly, retain employment.

Employment Programming
Pre-Employment/Job Readiness
Basic Transitional Employment
Advanced Transitional Employment
Job Development
Unsubsidized Employment

Pre-employment/job readiness classes include topics such as filling out job applications, applying online for jobs, resume building, interviewing skills, mock interviews, motivation at work, why people lose their jobs, and special events around work.

The **basic transitional employment program**, also known as KEY Project, has three basic work crews (21 work slots) staffed by a crew supervisor. These crews work outside of Roca and perform work for municipal and state entities. There is also a maintenance crew (3 slots) that works on-site at Roca doing general cleaning and maintenance. This crew represents an advancement from the outside crews. KEY participants are paid for the hours worked at a rate of \$8 per hour. To become part of KEY, a participant must first be referred by a youth worker. They are initially put into a “pre-work” slot; these slots are likened to “the bench”⁴² in sports where the participant is able to fill a slot when needed (i.e., in the event that someone does not show for work or is fired from a slot). If those designated as “pre-work” do not get a work slot for the day, they are expected to help out around Roca’s facility. The goal of KEY is for participants to retain their work slot for 60 days. It is expected that participants will lose their slot multiple times before reaching the 60-day retention mark given that young people come to Roca largely unprepared for work. When a slot is lost, the participant goes through a rehire process. Roca’s analyses have shown that it takes participants 18 to 24 months on average to reach the 60-day retention mark.

Upon reaching the 60-day retention benchmark, the participant begins work with a **job developer**. Job developers work with them to find job placements, to sustain employment and to advance in

⁴² Matt Thayer, Personal Interview, 23 September 2009.

employment. Developers meet with young people one-on-one to support employment goals and provide workshops to continue both soft and hard skill development.

Participants who make it through basic transitional employment have an opportunity to participate in **advanced transitional employment**. The work slots in advanced transitional employment are placements in jobs external to Roca, but with salaries subsidized by Roca. These jobs are essentially negotiated partnerships with external employers to provide a supported employment situation. Currently there are five advanced transitional jobs available. Participants in these jobs continue to work with a job developer to find permanent employment.

Participants who demonstrate a readiness for work through basic transitional employment and advanced transitional employment receive assistance gaining **unsubsidized employment** and continue to receive job development services.

The outputs or products of employment programming are participation and retention. How many participants attend pre-employment and job readiness classes? How many participate in transitional employment? What are the retention rates? How many drop out before retention benchmarks are achieved? How many participants are placed in jobs? What are their retention rates?

NEXT STEPS

IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

ONGOING DATA COLLECTION

For the remainder of this fiscal year, the evaluation will continue to gather and analyze data, with a particular focus on 1) filling in gaps in the documentation of the model and 2) fidelity to the model.

The data collection and analyses will focus on these areas:

- Information about the engaged institution strategy and outputs via the Springfield replication;
- Information from Roca's community partners and referral sources;
- Staff training;
- ETO data entered after system revisions were made (e.g., to programming categorizations, the central intake form, the quarterly participant report);
- Levels of engagement in transformational relationships and programming by client characteristics;
- Information about phase 3 (post-graduation) – identification of the core components, the level of contact and other intervention expected, services offered; and
- Fidelity to the components of the High Risk Youth Intervention Model.

The goal is for the model to be fully documented by June 2010 and an examination of fidelity to the model to be complete by that date as well. After fidelity has been examined in depth, the evaluation team will work with Roca to develop methods for ongoing monitoring of fidelity.

OUTCOME AND IMPACT EVALUATION

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The outcome evaluation is intended to answer the following questions:

- Do Roca participants decrease criminal and/or delinquent behavior and avoid pregnancies as a result of the intervention? Is this reduction in harmful behavior sustained?
- Do participants retain employment post-intervention?
- Do participants complete educational programming or continue educational pursuits as a result of the intervention?
- Do participants develop and sustain positive, constructive relationships?
- If the intervention produces positive results, for which populations is it most effective? Least?
- What level of intervention (e.g., number of years involved, number of contacts, participation in programming) is most effective?

- Are there any unintended consequences?

The impact evaluation will answer the following question:

- Are the outcomes of interest (employment, pregnancy, educational progress, constructive relationships, etc) significantly different for Roca participants compared to similar youth who did not participate in Roca programming?

EVALUATION DESIGNS

A team of evaluators, which includes the Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice, Abt Associates, and the Schneider Institute for Health Policy at Brandeis University, has been meeting this fall to determine the most rigorous evaluation design that can be applied to Roca's High Risk Youth Intervention Model. In addition, input is received from Roca's Evaluation Advisory Board.

The plan for the outcome evaluation is to use a failure rate design (survival analysis) as a way to determine what intervention components and participant characteristics predict which outcomes within the High Risk Youth Intervention Model.

The designs under consideration for the impact evaluation are all quasi-experimental in nature: difference-in-differences and the use of a simulated comparison group. The difference-in-differences design requires alternative groups of young people as similar to Roca's participants as possible. The groups initially considered included Chelsea High School students in the 9th Grade Academy who are not enrolled in Roca and young people in the Springfield, MA replication who are released from Hampden County Correctional Facility who are not enrolled with Roca (because this will be the primary referral source for Roca Springfield which will have a limited number of slots to start with). After discussions with the Advisory Board, the impact evaluation to examine court, street and gang involved young people between the ages of 17 and 24 and alternative groups of non-Roca young people identified through other sources. The different groups will be examined over time to determine which outcomes are achieved and to what extent. Controlling as much as possible for known differences between groups, comparisons are made across groups.

In the second design option considered, a simulated comparison group using characteristics of Roca's population is created based on literature. The simulated group is then compared with the Roca population. This design may be more problematic as it will require some external validation of the model.

APPENDIX A: REFERRAL SOURCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How did you first come to know about Roca and what it has to offer young people?
- 2) How do you determine which young people to refer to Roca? What criteria do you use?
- 3) What young people would you not refer to Roca?
- 4) How do you go about making a referral to Roca? What is the process?
 - a. Who do you speak with?
 - b. What information do you provide?
- 5) How do you know if Roca has accepted the referral and will continue to work with the young person?
- 6) Once a referral is made, how are you kept informed of the young person's progress?
- 7) How frequently do you communicate with Roca staff?
 - a. Who initiates the contacts? On the diagram, estimate out how much communication is initiated by Roca and how much by your organization. For example, if your organization initiates all the contact, you would mark a place on the line right next to the Roca arrow. If the contact is "50-50", the mark would go in the middle.



- b. Is the communication formal or informal? Is it usually in reference to a particular young person?
 - c. Overall, how much time (per week or per month) do you spend in communication with Roca staff?
- 8) Who are your primary contacts at Roca?
- 9) How does Roca engage your organization on an ongoing basis? How do you stay up-to-date on Roca's efforts and programming? How does Roca keep informed of your work?
- 10) Is there anything you think Roca should or could do to make the referral process easier or clearer?

APPENDIX B: TRAINING AND SUPERVISION TRACKING DATA ELEMENTS

- Date of hire

- Completion of required trainings
 - Date model training is completed

 - Date Motivational Interviewing training is completed

 - Date Peacemaking Circles training is completed

 - Date Efforts to Outcomes training is completed

- Job shadowing
 - Hours of job shadowing completed

 - Start date

 - End date

- Competency areas covered in supervision
 - Date of supervision

 - Content covered (based on staff competencies)

- Achievement of competency levels in each competency area (as determined by coordinator)
 - Date of Awareness

 - Date of Development

 - Date of Achievement

 - Date of Mastery

- Date deemed “fully trained” (as determined by coordinator and deputy director)

APPENDIX C: TRACKING FORM FOR ENGAGED INSTITUTIONS

Date of Contact				
Method of Contact				
Roca Representative				
Meeting Participants				
Relationship Stage of Change				
Meeting Purpose				
Accomplishments				
Policy or Practice Changes Achieved				
Resulting Agreements				
Referrals Resulting				
Next Steps				

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