

San Mateo Probation

StarVista Insights Program Annual Evaluation

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019



Helping People
Build Better Communities

About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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Program Description

StarVista Insights (Insights) is an outpatient adolescent counseling program that provides services for substance abuse treatment/recovery and mental health issues at offices in Redwood City and Daly City. The Insights program provides support to community youth and families at the point in time when adolescents are at risk of substance-related and/or behavioral issues. The program provides services to many adolescents who have legal issues and may have had problematic experiences with substance use. Many of these youth also experience co-occurring mental health issues associated with any number of potential traumatic experiences that have become common in our communities.

The Insights program continues to be a low-cost referral for outpatient adolescent counseling. Both sites are also Medi-Cal and Drug Medi-Cal approved locations. Therapeutic services for those presenting with co-occurring issues remains a limited resource in San Mateo County. Some individuals and families receiving services at Insights may not have been able to obtain these services elsewhere due to financial challenges. If a family at any time expresses hardship around making payments, fees are reduced or waived. If families have no health insurance, they are directed towards the process to obtain Medi-Cal through Health Plan of San Mateo.

Clients receiving services at Insights are typically between the ages of 12 and 18 years old. The majority of clients are enrolled in high school, although an occasional client is enrolled in middle school or has achieved a high school diploma or equivalent. Insights youth experience challenges around school attendance, relationships with authority, positive school-related activities, and healthy peer support. Additionally, a number of clients report gang involvement. The vast majority of clients at Insights are male, making up approximately 81% of clients served in fiscal year (FY) 2018-19.

Insights continues to emphasize the provision of support to schools in the area. Youth referred by their schools have typically been caught in some type of substance engaging behavior at or around school and are being strongly encouraged to participate in counseling in order to stay in good standing with the school administration. This can be seen as a positive progression and movement towards restorative justice in disciplinary action taken by school officials, as opposed to expelling them and/or calling the police leading to potential arrest. The youth referred by their schools appear to be taking their participation seriously and are actively working to improve.

Insights continues to serve families from various socioeconomic, racial, and familial backgrounds. The Daly City outpatient population (north San Mateo County) appears to show more uniformity in their socioeconomic status, with a majority falling in the low to lower-middle income brackets. Clients served at the Redwood City office who reside in south San Mateo County tend to represent a broader socioeconomic range.

Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2018-2019

StarVista Insights staff noted the following challenges by youth clients in 2018-2019.

“Insights Program staff and clinicians continue to notice challenges in the community around high risk behavior, including but not limited to: gang involvement, drug dealing, B&E, robbery, and extreme drug use. Conflicts appear to escalate very quickly whether it be an internal or external escalation. Youth tend to either quickly move to fighting (external) or turn inward towards their self-esteem (internal) and experience a different form of suffering. This is accounted for by the increases in suicide attempts and ideation in our communities.”

Clinical staff have also observed that substances are easily accessible and often used as a form of medication from the aforementioned internal suffering many youth experience. Youth find substances with relative ease, whether it is in the community or on the internet. This places further emphasis on education of wellness and healthy living, with hopes of giving young people the appropriate tools and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their futures.

Substances that continue to present amongst Insights youth are cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, Xanax, and opiate derivatives (pills and syrups). Cannabis use in different forms (oils, edibles, vaporizing) is most prevalent and makes it easier to avoid detection in public, thus making casual use easier and getting caught more difficult. With legalized adult use allowing greater accessibility in the community, staff believe that youth have another avenue to obtain cannabis, putting an even greater emphasis on the need for early intervention and education (similar to the language used around alcohol use due to its eventual legality at 21-yrs of age).

Staff also reported: “There is a clear need for youth to be educated around the risks of cannabis use at an early age. Youth appear to be using cannabis with a level of casual display and fearlessness that exemplifies a clear lack of understanding of the risks and/or disregard for any potential consequences. Insights clinicians continue to hear reports regarding the ease with which the youth are ‘vaping.’ Xanax abuse remains prevalent and is being used in dangerous amounts. Obtaining authentic prescription Xanax is often too difficult and youth resort to finding black market Xanax, which is typically more dangerous.”

Evaluation Methods

The Insights program is funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation), and monitors their program and reports client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are described below.

Clients and Services: Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors: Grantee programs used two assessments to provide a standard measure of risk, life functioning, and areas of need for all clients: the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (**JAIS**) and the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (**CANS**) assessment:

- **JAIS:** The JAIS is a risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool designed to assist in the effective and efficient supervision of youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. The tool has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment known as the JAIS Boys Risk or JAIS Girls Risk, administered in addition to the full assessment and reassessment components. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items, and yield an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.
- **CANS:** The CANS is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision-making in determining level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes. The CANS consists of multiple items scored on a 4-point scale of 0-3, with a score of 2 or 3 indicating an actionable need. The assessment is grouped into stand-alone modules: Risk Behaviors, Strengths, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, and Trauma. Each grantee completes a different set of CANS modules according to the makeup of their client population.

Outcomes: Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded programs collect data for a number of justice-related outcomes for program participants. Probation has elected to report these outcomes at 180 days post-entry; the reference group reflects the past year's cohort of program participants. In FY 2018-2019, Insights collected the following outcome measures:

- Arrests
- Detentions
- Probation violations
- Probation completions
- Court-ordered restitution completion

- Court-ordered community service completion.

Insights also collects three program-specific outcome measures to track progress toward its goal of improving outcomes for clients:

- Progress toward an identified goal
- Improvements in decision-making
- Improved relationship skills.

Evidence-Based Practices: JJCPA-funded programs are encouraged to follow evidence-based practices. In 2012, ASR conducted an evaluation and concluded that funded programs were using a variety of carefully-crafted practices to respond to the needs of their clients, but that those practices spanned the range of what is considered evidence-based.

Although the use of evidence-based practices was not emphasized in Probation's 2016-2020 Local Action Plan, there is an underlying assumption that funded programs are providing services to youth that are aligned with evidence-based models.

In FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19, ASR requested each funded program provide a catalogue of their practices. ASR then ran any new catalogued practices reported in FY 2018-19 through a number of clearinghouses to determine whether the practices were:¹

- Evidence-based theory or premise
- Evidence-based model, shown by multiple experimental or quasi-experimental studies to be effective
- Evidence-based practices, or modalities shown to promote positive outcomes
- Evidence-based tools, or instruments that have been validated (concurrent and predictive).

¹ For the full list of evidence-based practice clearinghouses used to evaluate programs, please see the JJCPA/JPCF Comprehensive Report for FY 2018-19.

Evaluation Findings

Fiscal Year 2018-19 Highlights

- The number of clients increased by 6% to 107 clients compared to that of FY 2017-18, and there was an 8% increase in the average number of hours of service.
- Insights served clients across the risk spectrum – 46% scored low, 43% scored moderate, and 11% scored high on the JAIS assessment.
- 2018-19 pre CANS results showed a noticeable decrease from 2017-18 in the percentage of youth with three or more actionable needs, from 93% to 58%. They also showed decreased needs on five CANS modules at post-test.

Profile of Clients Served

In FY 2018-19, Insights served 107 youth all of whom had available demographic data. The majority (81%) of participants were male, and the average age of clients was 16.7 years old. Sixty percent of youth identified as Latino/Hispanic, followed by 19% identifying as White/Caucasian. Youth received an average of 16.5 hours of service and spent an average of 5.1 months in the program. Over three-quarters (78%) of all service hours comprised of individual and group counseling, with 20% of hours dedicated to individual-only counseling, and 2% to family or individual & family counseling.

Table 1. Client Services

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Number of Clients Served	178	194	156	138	91	101	107
Average Number of Hours Served	19.9	16.8	15.7	13.2	14.3	15.3	16.5
Average Time in the Program (Months)	3.5	4.5	3.5	3.2	4.1	4.3	5.1

Risk Indicators

For each youth in their program, Insights evaluated three risk indicators upon entry: if the youth had a drug or alcohol problem, a school attendance problem, and/or a suspension or expulsion from school in the past year. In FY 2018-19, nearly three-quarters (74%) of clients had an alcohol or drug problem at entry, an increase from 66% in FY 2017-18. Additionally, almost one-third of clients entered with an attendance problem (29%), and 45% had been suspended or expelled in the past year.

Table 2. Risk Indicators at Program Entry

RISK INDICATORS AT PROGRAM ENTRY	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Alcohol or Drug Problem	45%	23%	66%	74%
Attendance Problem	23%	17%	38%	29%
Suspension/Expulsion in Past Year	56%	40%	44%	45%

n=82 in FY 18-19.

In FY 2018-19, Insights served clients across the risk spectrum. The 63 participants assessed with the JAIS assessment had criminogenic risk levels predominantly at the Low (46%) and Moderate (43%) levels, with 11% scoring High.

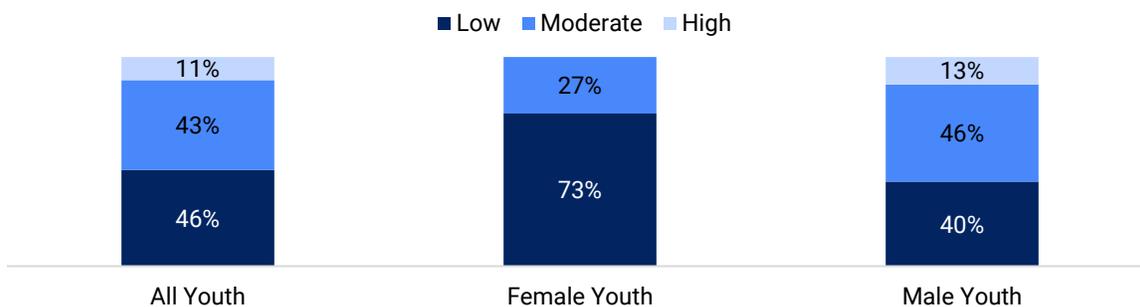
Table 3. JAIS Risk Levels

JAIS RISK LEVEL	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Low	39%	23%	42%	46%
Moderate	39%	58%	45%	43%
High	22%	19%	13%	11%

n=63 in FY 18-19.

When disaggregated by sex, the majority of male youth scored Low (40%) and Moderate (46%) on the criminogenic risk scale, while 73% of female youth scored Low.

Figure 1. Criminogenic Risk Level by Sex

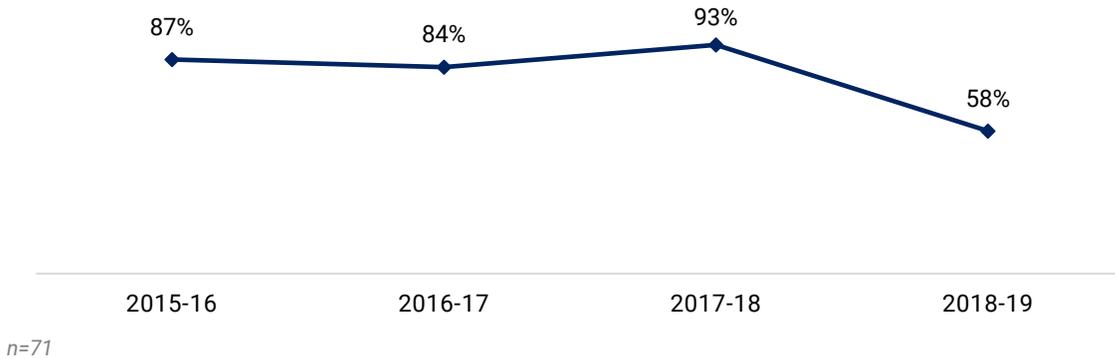


All Youth n=63; Female Youth n=11; Male Youth n=52; Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Functioning and Service Needs

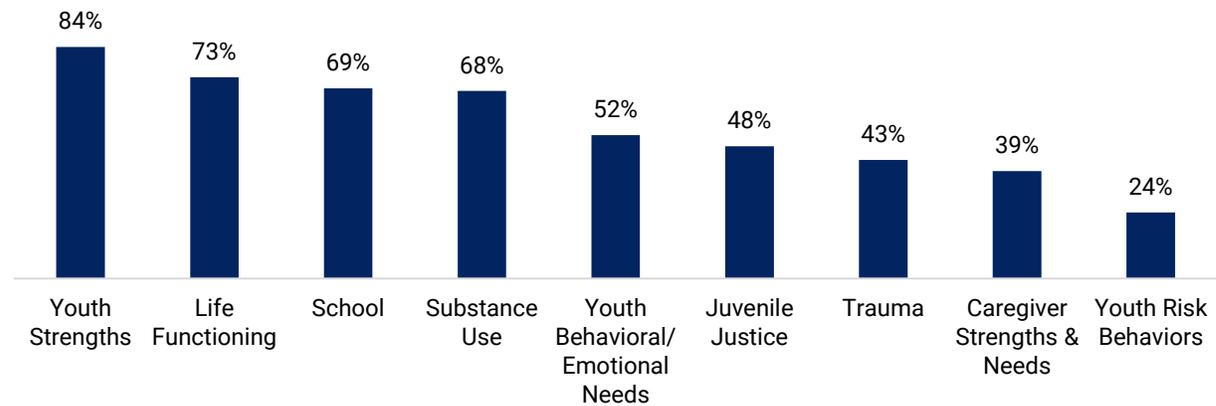
In total, the CANS assessment was conducted with 66% of youth who received services during FY 2018-19. Over half (58%) of respondents had three or more actionable needs at their pre-test, a substantial decrease from 93% in FY 2017-18.

Figure 2. Percent of Clients With Three or More Actionable Needs on Pre CANS



The figure below presents the percentage of clients with at least one actionable need at the pre CANS assessment. Several modules had high percentages of participants with actionable needs, including: Youth Strengths (84%), Life Functioning (73%), School (69%), and Substance Use (68%). The results show that Insights clients had needs in multiple areas, such as substance use problems, school issues, and resources and supports for their psychological states (e.g., resilience, optimism), social relationships (e.g., family strengths/support, relationship permanence), and community connections.

Figure 3. Percent of Clients With At Least One Moderate or Significant Need by Pre CANS Module



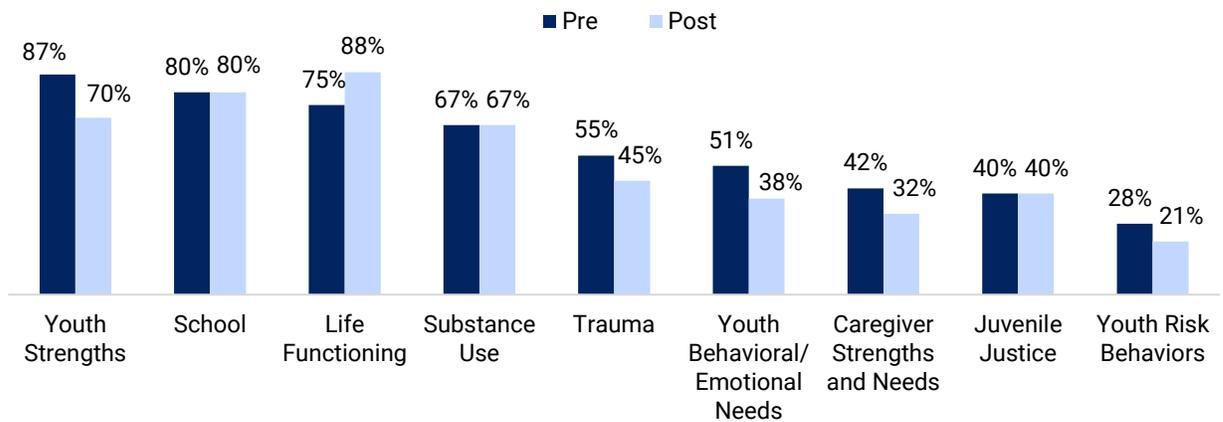
Life Functioning n=15; Youth Strengths n=70; Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs n=71; Youth Risk Behaviors n=71; Caregiver Strengths and Needs n=70; Juvenile Justice n=44; Trauma n=28; Substance Use n=41; School n=13.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of clients matched from pre to post CANS with actionable needs. Decreases in youth with actionable needs from pre to post were found on five CANS modules. Youth Strengths decreased by 17 percentage points; Youth Behavioral/Emotional

Needs decreased by 13 percentage points; Trauma and Caregiver Strengths and Needs decreased by 10 percentage points; and Youth Risk Behaviors decreased by 7 percentage points. This indicates that youth are experiencing boosts in strengths, caregiver strengths and needs, and behavioral and emotional health, reductions in traumatic symptoms and risk behaviors. In contrast, there was no change from pre to post CANS on the Juvenile Justice, Substance Use, and School modules.

The results also showed a 13-percentage point increase on the Life Functioning module. This indicates that youth possessed greater need for supports related to their living situation, social connections, or medical help at the post CANS assessment.

Figure 4. Percent of Clients With At Least One Moderate or Significant Need by CANS Module at Pre and Post



Life Functioning n=8; Youth Strengths n=61; Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs n=61; Youth Risk Behaviors n=61; Caregiver Strengths and Needs n=60; Juvenile Justice n=20; Trauma n=11; Substance Use=21; School n=5.

Matching pre and post CANS assessment data were only available for a limited pool of clients. In addition, there is a significant amount of fluctuation in the number of youth who report on each CANS module at pre and post. To more effectively address the needs of all youth served by Insights, attention should be paid to ensuring that pre and post CANS assessments are provided for every youth on all required modules.

Justice Outcomes

The table below presents justice-related outcomes for 74 youth whose six-month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in FY 2018-19. As shown, the rates for detentions and probation violations stayed relatively stable, while arrests for new law violations increased from the prior fiscal year.

Table 4. Justice Outcomes

JUSTICE OUTCOMES	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Arrests for a New Law Violation	26%	15%	13%	19%
Detentions	54%	50%	32%	32%
Probation Violations	48%	29%	36%	31%
Completed Court-Ordered Probation	13%	13%	29%	10%
Completed Court-Ordered Restitution	26%	15%	60%	0%
Completed Court-Ordered Community Service	54%	50%	38%	44%

FY 18-19 Arrests for a New Law Violation n=74, Detentions n=74, Probation Violations n=52, Completed Court-Ordered Probation n=52, Completed Court-Ordered Restitution n=7, Completed Court-Ordered Community Service n=25.

Note: Court-ordered restitution percentages fluctuate more than others due to the small sample of youth to whom this outcome applies (e.g., five youth in 2017-18, seven youth in 2018-19).

Program Specific Outcomes

Each year, Insights sets three program goals for their clients to achieve over the course of the fiscal year: improvements in decision-making, relationship building, and progress towards an identified goal. Insights surpassed their FY 2017-18 goals, particularly on the improved decision-making measure (97%).

Table 5. Insights Program Outcomes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19 TARGET	FY 18-9 RESULTS
Percentage of Participants Showing Progress Toward an Identified Goal	98%	98%	89%	98%	97%	87%	75%	97%
Percentage of Participants Showing Improvement in Decision Making	85%	86%	84%	67%	92%	87%	60%	96%
Percentage of Participants Showing Improved Relationship Skills	74%	90%	100%	67%	92%	89%	60%	93%

Note: Sample sizes vary for each fiscal year

Evidence-Based Practices

In FY 2018-19, JJCPA-funded programs listed the practices employed in their programs. ASR evaluated the given practices to determine whether the programs were evidence-based or promising practices based on a search of evidence-based practice clearinghouses.

Table 6. Evidence-Based Practices

CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	RATING
Seeking Safety	Seeking Safety is a present-focused therapy to help people attain safety from symptoms of trauma/PTSD and substance abuse. Topics most commonly applied at Insights include: safety, self-empowerment, substance use, high-risk behavior, honesty, asking for help, healthy relationships, community resources, compassion, creating meaning, self-care, coping skills, identifying triggers, and life choices. Insights clinicians receive on-going training and continue to develop creative and interactive ways of engaging clients in the material, using various modalities of therapy.	Evidence-based practice according to The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, with a rating of 2 on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 as well-supported with evidence and 5 as concerning). ²
Motivational Interviewing/ Motivational Enhancement Therapy	Insights clinicians utilize principals of MI/MET to support clients who may be ambivalent about changing maladaptive behaviors. The therapist meets the client where they are and does not attempt to change the client in any way. Rather, the therapist supports the client in identifying values and goals, and how these align or not with their current behaviors and thought processes.	Evidence-based practice according to The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, with a rating of 1 on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 as well-supported with evidence and 5 as concerning). ³ However, the Office of Justice Programs rates Motivational Interviewing for Juvenile Substance Abuse as having no effect for clients age 14-19. ⁴
Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment (MBSAT)	Insights clinicians also utilize the MBSAT for adolescent curriculum to enhance youth awareness around multiple areas of need. Clinicians work together to continue to develop creative and interactive ways of engaging clients in the material in all modalities of therapy.	Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment is a promising practice based upon scientific literature. ⁵

² <http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/substance-abuse-treatment-adult/>

³ <http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/motivational-interviewing/>

⁴ <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=180>

⁵ Marcus, M. T., & Zgierska, A. (2009). *Mindfulness-Based Therapies for Substance Use Disorders: Part 1 (Editorial)*. *Substance Abuse: Official Publication of the Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse*, 30(4), 263. <http://doi.org/10.1080/08897070903250027>

Client Story

Each year, Insights staff provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services. The following is the client story provided by Insights for FY 2018-19.

Name of Client	J.D. (Pseudonym)
Age and Gender	16, male
Reason for Referral	J.D. was a junior in high school at the time of his enrollment at Insights. He was on probation for possession and use of cannabis and required to complete Insights D&A counseling program.
Client's Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program	J.D. appeared to use substances to cope with his overwhelming emotions, pain, and loss he endured; a significant amount from being beside his friend as he died. J.D.'s mother came in to speak to a clinician personally regarding the previous loss that J.D. had experienced. At that time, he had not been able to talk about this trauma. At the beginning of treatment, J.D. was homeless. He was often moving from shelter to shelter over the last two years. He planned to quit substance use "cold turkey" though had difficulty putting this into action. J.D. had varying reasons for using substances ranging from general anxiety to excessive vigilance. This was likely attributed to his past trauma causing him to constantly feel the need to be aware of his surroundings leading to feeling on edge and irritable.
Activity Engagement and Consistency	<p>Three months into the program, he obtained a job that allowed him to help his family with the bills. While good news, this brought additional stressors into his life. He suddenly needed to grow up at a young age and was quickly given the responsibility to help provide for his family. Work was a responsibility that he focused on due to the value and positivity he felt from providing for one's family.</p> <p>He did not know if graduating high school was a goal he could accomplish. He was attending a continuation school for his 11th grade year and moved to a new school to complete 12th grade. This was a big transition considering he was now also managing a full-time job. Education was a value held strong in his family, a treasure of achievement that eluded not only his parents, but his older sister, as well. At first, J.D. felt therapy was just a means to an end of probation, but he soon began to actively engage in therapy as a place of reflection and growth.</p> <p>This began to impact the decisions he made regarding his day to day challenges and lead to different and better personal outcomes. He had more difficulty completing the program than most youth but ended up completing the program in almost a year and a half with 60 individual and 12 group sessions (72 in total).</p>
What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program	J.D. chose to attend an additional session with this clinician where he communicated his gratitude for every clinician at Insights that supported him throughout his program, pushing him to go beyond his goals. J.D. obtained his high school diploma, received his

	<p>certification for Automotive Technician- Entry Level, processed his emotions related to work and home environment, and maintained his sobriety. Towards the end of treatment and after almost three years, J.D. was feeling the comfort of having a stable home environment.</p>
<p>What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program</p>	<p>Nearing the end of his treatment, at 18-years old, J.D. had worked to complete his goals in treatment: improved understanding of emotional regulation, graduating from high school, working full time, and also completing his certificate for Automotive Technician-Entry Level. He identified the advocacy and case management support he received from clinicians at Insights to be a big part of his success.</p>