

Guidelines for creating a concrete action plan to deal with crisis/problem situations/care crises of individual young persons aged 13 to 18 in residential youth care Focus: Cooperation with adequate external persons and facilities

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For coping with difficult and complex care situations and times with individual young persons aged 13 to 18 (YP 13/18) and for the continuous assistance and support in times of massive crisis, it is essential to develop an action plan for the cooperation with external persons and/or facilities. This enables the concretisation of the necessary clarity with regard to the action to be taken - for each employee, for the entire team and, also, for the external persons/facilities. This action plan must be **regularly evaluated** (sometimes within very short intervals) **and**, often, **adapted** at short notice because of unforeseeable changes.

Often, developing a concrete action plan is an intensive **negotiation process** between all persons and facilities that are (potentially) responsible for the YP 13/18. Essentially it clarifies the **possibilities and limitations** of the respective support system in this particular case.

Clarity about the perception of the problem/crisis situation by both the YP 13/18 themselves as well as the support team in the residential youth care home (RYCH) are an essential basis for the decisions to be made. **Good preparation for the talks** with the (potential) adequate external persons/facilities is recommended!

✓ **Action plan - when?**

Latest¹

- after a YP 13/18 has been through an **acute crisis** (e. g. self-injurious behaviour)
- after the occurrence of massive **escalations** within the group (e. g. massive (verbal) aggression/violence against others - threat, endangerment to others)
- if the **care process** has been considered at risk or imposing a risk (to themselves or others) **for a longer period of time**, e. g. by regularly occurring negative or development-critical behaviour (e. g. frequent offenses, drug abuse in the facility, dependencies).

✓ **Action plan - what for?**

In order to, in times of particularly high stress and challenge of/with YP 13/18,

- a) reduce the likelihood for the **next crisis, escalation etc.** to develop because the activation of the (short-term) support option/cooperation with external persons/facilities has been forgotten;
- b) increase the probability, in case of a massive **pedagogical or psychiatric care crisis**, there can be (sooner or later) further care in this facility and no early

¹ Ideally, in advance, when clear signs of an impending crisis are perceived!

termination must be/is initiated because not all adequate or potential external persons/facilities can be informed and no sufficient support for the development and implementation of a care concept to be adapted can be agreed (e. g. additional care capacity, psychological and/or adolescent-psychiatric assessment and concomitant treatment; external supervision, short-term training of the team)

c) not to forget: what

- **information on particular incidents** in the care must be passed on to adequate external persons/facilities due to requirements (e. g. legal or contractual obligation to inform the youth welfare office);
- **agreements** (e. g. with parents, teachers) have been made and must be observed.

✓ **Steps towards a concrete action plan - who, what, how?**

- The **assessment** of the situation and the condition of the YP 13/18 is carried out based on observations, discussions and resulting perceptions of the **individual carers**.
- The **communication** takes place **orally** during handovers, team meetings, phone calls, etc. **with** colleagues or other relevant persons (internal or external ones) **or in writing, in the form of** memos, reports etc. (mainly dependent on the internal and external organisation structures).
- The **decision on the need for** additional or some other form of external assistance/cooperation is made depending on the organisational structure and infrastructure (expertise of staff, disciplines, etc.) of the RYCH or the executing organisation.
- Clarifying **the responsibility for establishing contact meeting /** concretisation.
- The manner of communication will be decided individually by the parties/responsible persons.
- The concrete **agreement** of necessary steps, supportive measures, targets, etc. is, at least, documented **in writing in the action plan** in the facility.

Remember: The action plan contains the agreed targets, agreements and necessary steps as matched with the respective crisis situation/are crisis of an individual or a group of YP 13/18 in care! **The more concrete and binding** they are, the less room for interpretation is left open for the acting persons (employees of the facility, externally responsible persons, also young people).² During the crisis situation, this provides safety and support; the probability for a positive management increases. And: The action plan must be **continuously evaluated** and, if necessary, **adapted!**

² Also see guideline for the development of a general action plan (Unit 3.1).