

STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH TO JUVENILE HEARING BOARD (JHB) SANCTIONS

Rhode Island for Community & Justice

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JHB sanctions (assignments) are based in restorative justice and intended to hold youth accountable for their actions, repair any harm or damage caused, and provide meaningful opportunities for development to help prevent future involvement in the criminal justice system. In a strengths-based approach, sanctions are individually tailored to a youth based on their strengths in order to promote growth and success.

DISCOVERING YOUTHS' STRENGTHS

The CliftonStrengths Assessment is one way to gain insight into a youth's strengths. There are 34 strengths themes divided into four domains,

- **Executing**: the ability to generate action.
- **Relationship Building**: the ability to create and strengthen social connections.
- **Influencing**: the ability to communicate effectively and make an impact.
- **Strategic Thinking**: the ability to take in and analyze information.

We also can learn about a youth's strengths through conversations. Examples of questions that may reveal a youth's strengths include the following,

- When and/or where are you at your best?
- What do you enjoy doing or learning about most?
- What is the best thing about yourself?
- What is the best class you've taken, job you had, or team/project you've been part of?
- What do you want to be doing with your life in 10 years in terms of work, school, and family?

The CliftonStrengths Five Clues to Talent is also a useful resource for starting these conversations.

ASSIGNING SANCTIONS

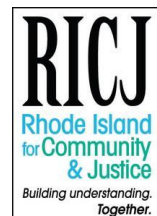
There is a lot to consider when assigning sanctions in addition to a youth's strengths such as severity of the incident, extent of harm done, the youth's interests/career goals, their access to resources, and their needs. JHBs often assign more than one sanction.

Description of Possible Sanctions

- Youth programs can help youth develop passion and new social connections. E.g., recreation, education, development programs.
- Community service can help youth to engage in their community and see a bigger picture. E.g., social, environmental, food, donation community services.

Developed from the Handbook for JHBs in RI, Gallup CliftonStrengths, and the RICJ JHB Sanction Recommendations, Ideas, and Toolkit.

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- Career exploration can help youth learn potential options for their future. E.g., job programs, volunteering, meeting/shadowing professionals, taking classes.
- Journaling/reflection can help youth process the incident/aftermath and provide emotional benefits. E.g., creative writing, gratitudes, affirmations, tracking moods or behaviors.
- Victim-focused sanctions can help youth take responsibility for their actions and begin to repair harm by directly addressing the affected people. E.g., reaching out to a victim and asking for a personal statement, writing a letter of apology, mediated reconciliation.
- Interview projects help youth better understand how their actions affect community by getting to know people affected by similar incidents. E.g., neighbors, survivors, individuals in recovery from substance abuse.
- Research projects can help youth learn more about topics related to their actions that brought them to the JHB, personal interests, or their community.
- Essays/reports help youth communicate what they learned through their JHB experience. This can take any form to help youth feel a sense of ownership and accomplishment for having created and completed something. E.g., formal essay, slideshow presentation, original song.
- Other assignments that are not strengths-based can be key components of youth diversion. E.g., health evaluations, drug testing/evaluation, referrals to counseling, school reports, curfews, restitution, and more.

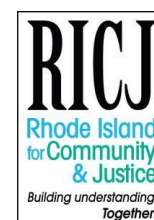
Examples of Possible Strengths-Based Sanctions by Incident and CliftonStrengths Domain

The following examples are intended to be used for inspiration—they are not recommendations.

INCIDENT	EXECUTING <i>action</i>	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING <i>connection</i>	INFLUENCING <i>impact</i>	STRATEGIC THINKING <i>information</i>
Disorderly conduct	Community service at a food bank	Recreation program	Development program	Job program
Simple assault	Recreation program	Victim-focused such as a letter of apology	Interview a community member affected by violence	Journaling/reflection regarding violence
Malicious damage/vandalism	Community service with an environmental organization	Community service with a social organization	Community service at a donation center	Education program
Alcohol/drug possession	Job program	Interview a community member about overcoming substance abuse	Community service with a social organization	Research project on harm reduction

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Five Clues to Talent

1 **Yearning**

To what kinds of activities are you naturally drawn?

2 **Rapid Learning**

What kinds of activities do you seem to pick up quickly?

3 **Flow**

In what activities did you seem to automatically know the steps to be taken?

4 **Glimpses of Excellence**

During what activities have you had moments of subconscious excellence when you thought, "How did I do that?"

5 **Satisfaction**

What activities give you a kick, either while doing them or immediately after finishing them, and you think, "When can I do that again?"