



# SHORTSTOP

Since 1980, SHORTSTOP has set thousands of youth offenders back on the right path before they have strayed too far. This unique juvenile crime diversion program provides a cost-effective alternative to prosecution and utilizes science-based models for reducing delinquency among youth. By completing SHORTSTOP, youth are able to move forward in a positive direction, without serving jail time or having a criminal record.

SHORTSTOP works to break the cycle that turns youth into repeat offenders. It's a wake-up call that has proven to be extremely successful. In fact, studies show that alternatives to detention are not only cost-effective, but they are much more effective than incarceration at facilitating long-term behavior changes.

SHORTSTOP is an integral part of a larger system reform, acting as a key stakeholder on Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative efforts in Orange County. Its success has positioned Project Youth OC as a leader, not only in Southern California but throughout the nation, in providing successful youth diversion programs that are replicable state and nationwide.

*"SHORTSTOP was a pivotal and humbling experience for my family.*

***It was a  
life-altering  
intervention  
for which we are  
deeply grateful.***

*I can say with all certainty that SHORTSTOP was a game-changer. It showed our daughter where the dead-end path she was on was heading. She went from flirting with dangerous choices to being an honor student setting off to college this fall. Thank you, SHORTSTOP!"*

- SHORTSTOP parent





# our impact

Evaluation efforts have proven that SHORTSTOP makes a measurable difference in the lives of at-risk youth. We are proud to report that 96% of participating youth do not recidivate within a year of completing the program. Additional program outcomes include:

- 66%** increase in youth desire to attend college or trade school
- 63%** increase in youth peer refusal skills
- 88%** improvement in parent/child communication
- 91%** improvement in parental monitoring
- 80%** reduction in child acting out/fighting
- 96%** of parents would recommend SHORTSTOP to another parent

*SHORTSTOP is free of charge and made possible through financial support from donors who believe in and invest in our mission. When you give to Project Youth OC, your donation helps local youth to achieve their potential, empower people of all ages to lead healthier lives, and strengthen the bonds of family and community in Orange County.*

## SHORTSTOP is not a scared straight program.

While program sessions begin by giving youth a realistic view of the criminal justice system, the primary focus is to help youth gain critical legal education, plan for a brighter future, and strengthen family bonds.

### Intake

The two-hour clinical intake assessment gathers valuable information about the youth's at-risk behaviors, emotional stability, substance use, impact of COVID-19, family dynamics, and school functioning.

### Sessions

Two program sessions (four-hours each) are held in a courtroom and/or at the Project Youth OC office. They include a visit to the holding cell; presentations from wards from the Youth Guidance Center; a trial simulation; and legal education presentations, including parents' legal rights and responsibilities. The majority of the time is devoted to developing youth protective factors: communication and conflict resolution skills, peer refusal and problem-solving skills, self-control, school connectedness, participation in pro-social activities, personal responsibility, and parental monitoring.

### Assignments

Another critical part of SHORTSTOP is what happens at home. Mandatory assignments include reading legal education materials, interviewing a working professional in the community to explore future career paths, engaging in family communication exercises and completing goal-setting and other writing assignments.

### Case Management and Referral Services

As needed, youth and families are referred to additional mental health, family therapy, or other wrap-around services.



After completing SHORTSTOP, youth may choose to participate in our ICAN! program, which assists at-risk, transition-age youth, ages 16 and up, to identify their career interests and complete a vocational training program.



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