



When a Youth Returns Tips for Staff

What you can do

“I’m so glad you are back. I was worried about you.”

Tell the youth how happy you are that they are back, how worried you were for them while they were gone and then *listen without judgement* to what they have to say.

DCYF staff must follow the Missing from Care Policy 4550. The policy provides guidance for:

- Reporting and notifications
- Debriefing procedures
- Run prevention and intervention efforts
- Documentation requirements

When a youth returns from a run Engaging a youth is essential when they return:

- Listen to them
- Make them feel welcome
- Tell them how you feel about their return
- Ask if they need anything
- Stay solution-focused

Youth run from something or to something:

- Friends
- Family
- Places where they feel accepted

Talk about:

- Who are your friends?
- How can I get ahold of your friends?
- Where do you like to hang out?
- What do you do?
- Who is one person you ALWAYS stay in contact with?
- How do you get ahold of them?
- What is their phone number?

Some questions you can ask during debriefing:

- Are you OK?
- Do you need anything?
 - Support?
 - Services?
 - Medical attention?
- What do you need right now to feel safe?
- Who should I contact to let them know you are safe?
- Is there anything I can do to make it easier to stay?
- Was there anything that would have changed your mind?
- What did you hope would happen when you left?
- Did you have a plan of how to take care of yourself?
- Did it work out? This can help lead to:
 - Where did you run?
 - What did you do?
 - Who did you contact?
 - What happened to you while on the run?
- What made you decide to return?
- What are some things you want to work on?
- What do you want to see happen in the next three months?
- Where do you see yourself in a year?
 - What do we need to work on to get you there?
- It is important to use the information obtained in the debriefing to prevent a future run.
 - Develop a Youth Run Prevention Plan
 - Give the youth a voice
 - Solution-focused
- Based on the information gathered you can help develop targeted interventions. For further details, see the Run Prevention tip sheet for staff. An example would be:
 - If a youth runs to see biological family, look at current safety issues and, if possible, place with family or increase family visits.

For more information, visit:
www.dcyf.wa.gov



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CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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