

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/new-years-resolution-for-family-focused-youth-services>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

As you might expect, the end-of-the-year holidays present an opportunity for youth service programs to focus on families. No matter what the rest of the year looks like, suddenly calendars fill with dinners, presents, and special family visits.

Social service programs aren't unusual in this regard; a lot of people respond to the holiday season with a spike in family engagement. TV commercials are filled with images of people happily gathering. The music in every store croons about home. Celebrations of all faiths and traditions include loved ones. People connect intensely for a few weeks when the weather gets cold, then reflect and resolve to keep those connections alive all year round.

From a practice perspective, a resolution to incorporate a family-focused approach to youth services is a lot like the resolutions many people make as the New Year comes. The decision is always based in good intentions, but it takes commitment, planning, and action to sustain it beyond the second week in January. And sometimes it helps to have a coach to keep you engaged in the process.

In the coming year, Vera's [Adolescent Portable Therapy](#) project will be providing technical assistance to clinical services programs for young people in New York City and other jurisdictions to help them include a family therapy approach in their services all year round.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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