



PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCE TRAITS

Research indicates that individuals who possess and utilize certain interpersonal skills to develop an effective, professional relationship can increase compliance with treatment, reduce violations, reduce recidivism, and improve outcomes.

These **professional alliance traits** have been identified as one of the “*Four Core Competencies*” for juvenile justice professionals in Pennsylvania, along with developing **effective case plans**, using **skill practice** with juveniles to address criminogenic needs, and utilizing **rewards and sanctions** to respond to both pro-social and noncompliant behaviors.

Articulate

Able to communicate freely. Provides sufficient detail and context for true communication to occur. Neither speaks in short utterances nor dominates a discussion by being verbose.

Attentive

Non-verbal communication (e.g., direct eye contact, head nods, body leaning forward) indicates alertness. Is not easily distracted and, when distraction occurs, quickly returns focus.

Authentic

Comments and actions are honest and straightforward. Does not use manipulation or half-truths in order to gain compliance. Says what he/she means and means what he/she says.

Confident

Is not wishy-washy about what he/she says. Knows the business of juvenile justice and communicates it without hesitation or apology. Is comfortable saying “I don’t know,” but then will find out the answer, if needed. Conveys a sense of self-confidence about his/her knowledge and ability.

Empathetic

Understands the past and present circumstances of juveniles and their families and how barriers may have contributed to difficulties. Does not accept misbehavior, but can relate to how that behavior comes about. Recognizes that behavior is heavily influenced by internal and external conditions, that not all people have similar abilities and talents to overcome their circumstances, and that different people may require different interventions. Is non-judgmental, but does not excuse or sympathize with antisocial or criminal behavior.

Empowering

Believes that people can change and communicates this belief with conviction. Provides juveniles with reasons to try behavioral change programs and strategies, especially ones that may stretch their comfort zone.



Flexible

Is able to change strategy as soon as there appears to be a reason to do so. Does not get stuck on one approach when that approach is not working. Recognizes that circumstances often change and that intervention strategies and case plans should change accordingly.

Listens actively

Is highly attuned to words and non-verbal communication. Employs effective Motivational Interviewing techniques to encourage juveniles and their families to speak candidly. Asks open-ended questions and listens non-judgmentally.

People-oriented

Genuinely cares about juveniles and their families, even if the behavior that led to juvenile justice system involvement is troubling. Wants what is best for juveniles and their families and communicates that with sincerity.

Purposeful

Is intentional; has a goal for each session. Is clear about what is expected and communicates these expectations with clarity. Provides juveniles with behavioral choices and is clear about the consequences of choices.

Reinforcing

Supports progress toward change. Believes that behavioral change is possible. Discusses skills and information enthusiastically, thereby encouraging engagement and hope on the part of juveniles and their families.

Respectful

Respects the time and effort of juveniles and their families. Treats individuals with dignity. Does not use name-calling or disparage the character of others. Focuses on the behavior, not the person. Uses manners and civility, as if offenders were acquaintances.

Sense of humor

Is able to enjoy interactions with others and to make light of situations, when appropriate. Recognizes that humor can be used effectively to reduce stress/conflict or shed light on a subject.

Strength-based

Identifies the strengths of juveniles and their families, and encourages them to use their strengths to overcome barriers and accomplish goals. Recognizes that the strengths of juveniles and their families are often untapped because they don't always know how to apply them to current problems.