

YLS/CMI™ 2.0: Leisure/Recreation

This brief aims to provide information for all Youth Justice staff about for what works for young people when addressing assessed need in the Leisure/Recreation domain of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI™) 2.0.

High need in Leisure/Recreation: What does this mean?

Young people who have high need within the Leisure/Recreation domain of the YLS/CMI™ will often:

- Be disengaged from organised prosocial activities.
- Associate less with prosocial individuals.
- Achieve a sense of connection through antisocial networks and groups.
- Lack a regular daily routine.
- Struggle to remain engaged in structured activities.

How to address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Addressing the Leisure/Recreation need means identifying some of the criminogenic thinking patterns linked to motivation to engage in leisure and recreation for example, identifying with antisocial companions and/or demand for excitement; and helping the young person to **develop positive connections and a sense of belonging within prosocial groups**. You should encourage them to:

- Participate in rewarding activities.
- Regularly engage in structured activities (e.g. prosocial group or clubs).
- Develop a sense of connection to prosocial individuals through planned activities.

Can participation in sport address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Yes, but only if it includes regular and ongoing participation that promotes social connection.

Participation in sport is beneficial for a young person's health and mental wellbeing. There is some evidence that sport programs [can reduce reoffending](#). However, participation in sport alone does not change reoffending behaviour. Instead, the change in offending behaviour happens because of [a sense of belonging and positive relationships](#) that can be developed in a sport setting. This means that to reduce reoffending, a sport program must provide [social connections and positive role modelling](#).

Can traditional martial arts address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Sometimes, if practiced for a long time and based in a philosophy of non-violence.

Research shows that practice of traditional martial arts (e.g. Karate, Judo, Taekwondo, Aikido, Kung Fu) can [reduce aggressive behaviour](#) and [increase mental and physical health](#) when it is practiced [over a long period of time](#). A consistent practice can help to develop [emotional control and self-regulation](#). To achieve these benefits, physical training should be supplemented by a philosophy that emphasises [prosocial behaviours](#), [non-violence aggression](#), and [respect for others](#). Further, trainers play a significant role in guiding positive change. Behavioural changes occur when trainers [encourage students to take responsibility, maintain rules, and promote open communication](#).

Can modern martial arts address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Maybe, but they are [less effective than traditional martial arts](#).

Research about the effects of modern martial arts (e.g. Boxing, MMA, Kickboxing) on offending behaviour is mixed. Modern martial arts focus more on [physical techniques than philosophy](#), and do not provide the same mental benefits as traditional martial arts. Some studies reveal participation in boxing increases [aggressiveness outside the gym and non-violent antisocial behaviour](#). Boxing can reinforce beliefs that violence is an [appropriate response to a problem](#) and there is often hyper-masculine talk that occurs in boxing gyms which contributes to this. Some of the messages transmitted in boxing gyms [exclude women, promote homophobia and mirror derogatory street talk](#). As such, participation in boxing can reinforce antisocial behaviour rather than prevent it. Researchers argue that to be effective in reducing reoffending, boxing classes need to [think more strategically about the use of the sport](#) and teach young people that it is [masculine to walk away from violence](#) rather than to physically respond to it.

Can social media and online gaming address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Maybe, when it is age-appropriate, structured, prosocial, and used in moderation.

Social media: Australian teenagers and young people spend a lot of time on social media – [on average 2 hours per day](#). [Social](#) media platforms are not inherently good or bad. When used appropriately, social media can [promote social engagement, positive development, communication, and creativity](#). On the other hand, overuse of social media correlates with [social exclusion, self-harm or suicide, victimisation depression, anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem](#). For young people in contact with Youth Justice, social media can provide a platform [to brag about crimes](#), connect with [antisocial peers, and commit cyber-crimes, such as cyber-stalking and bullying](#).

Gaming: Video games can also have positive or negative influence on young people. They can teach [problem-solving, teamwork, and cooperation](#). On the other hand, video games can also correlate with [increased aggression, reduced victim empathy, and offending behaviour](#). For social media and video games to have a positive effect on young people, [supervision of online activity, age-appropriate games and content, and conversations about privacy and online abuse are advised](#).

What other activities address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Any **regular group-based engagement** within community that fosters a sense of belonging and commitment can contribute to reducing need in the Leisure/Recreation domain. For example, regular attendance at a [church youth group](#), cultural-based [arts](#) groups (arts, dance, theatre, story-telling). Connecting a young person to specific **community agencies** or people in a **mentoring** capacity can also assist to develop personal interests and increase likelihood of ongoing attendance and commitment to prosocial activities.

What core programs address high need in Leisure/Recreation?

Core internal programs that address high Leisure/Recreation needs include:

- Integrated Case Management (ICM)
- Transition to Success (T2S)
- Changing Habits and Reaching Targets (CHART)
- Black Chicks Talking (BCT)
- Young, Black and Proud (YBP)
- Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control (ERIC)*
- Girls... Moving On (GMO)

*Note ERIC does not address Leisure/Recreation needs specifically, however delivery of specific modules within ERIC are likely to complement service responses targeting this area.