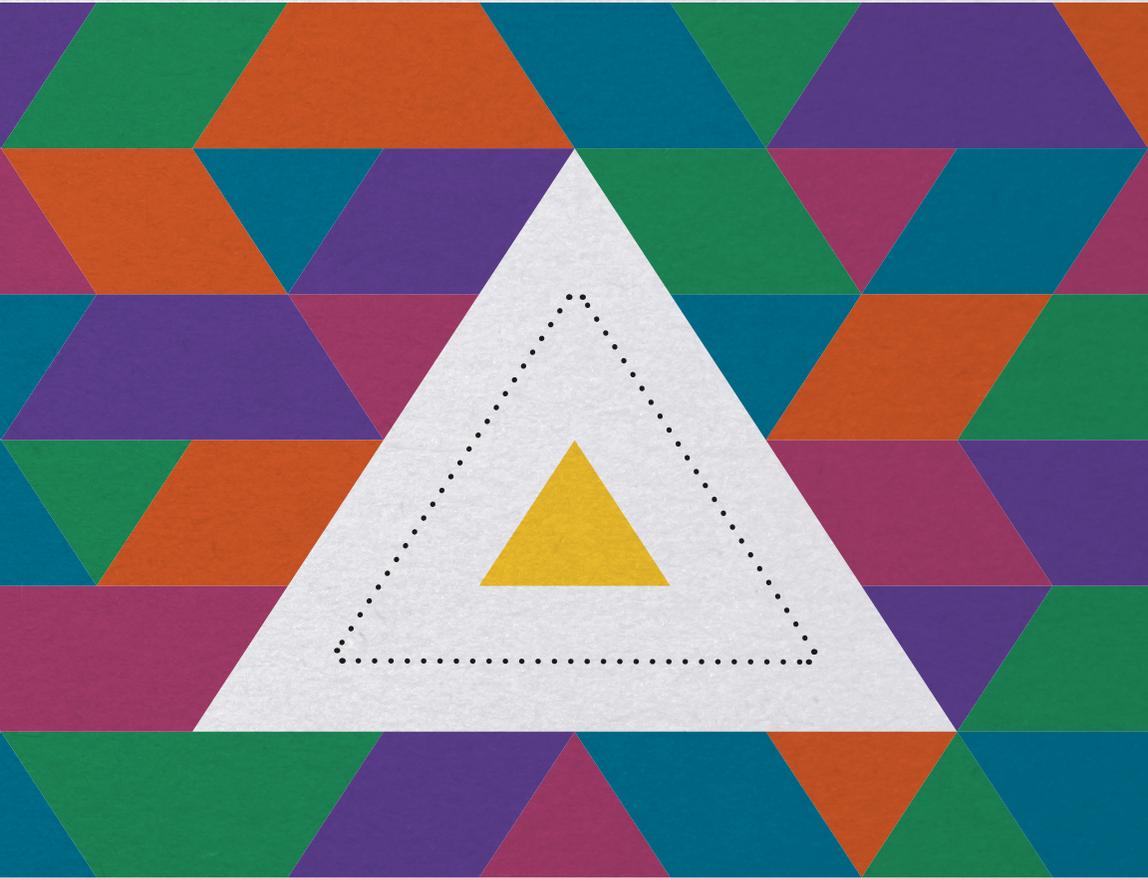


from incident to
OPPORTUNITY



**THE MIDDLETOWN YOUTH
DIVERSION TEAM**



So, you made a mistake.

Now you have a big decision to make.
You might be asking, "What do I do next?
Should I go to court? What are my options?"

It's important for you to know that the Middletown community believes an incident like yours can be turned into an opportunity for growth. We know that young people make mistakes and there needs to be accountability for harm caused, but a bad decision shouldn't follow them for the rest of their lives.

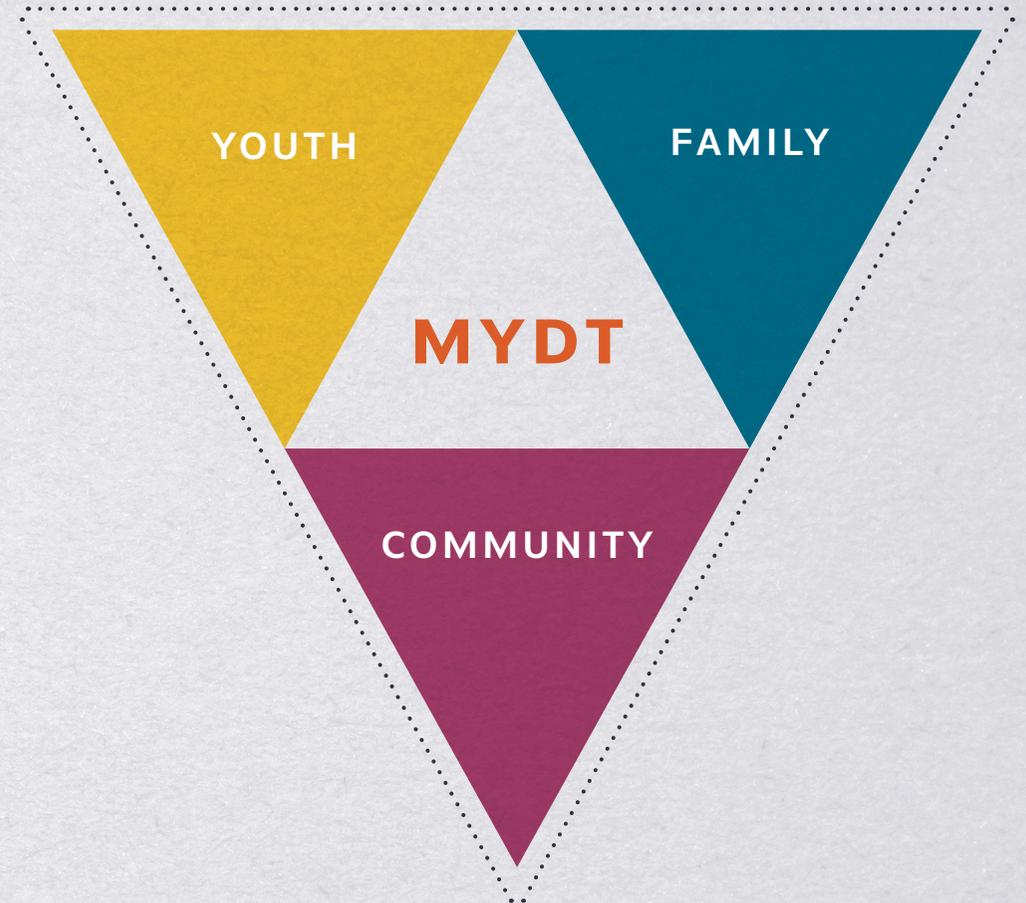
For some, this may be a bump in the road. And for others, this could be the right time to address a series of disruptive events. But for youth who qualify, there is an option other than going to court...and it could be your next big opportunity.

The Middletown Youth Diversion Team (MYDT) is a group of volunteers who care a lot about the success of our community's youth.

The Diversion team includes staff from the *Youth Services Bureau*, schools, the police department, juvenile probation, local non-profits and community groups, and the faith community. Our team believes that every family is unique, and youth should be able to take responsibility for their actions and receive individualized support, without having to enter the juvenile justice system or other systems first.

While we work to provide a **DIVERSION** from court we also strive for the long-term goal of maintaining connections with youth and families.

You have our support now, and in the future.



Our approach strengthens connections between youth, families, and our community. We believe in encouraging youth to learn from their mistakes and want to work together to help achieve this.

What is "Diversion"?

Diversion in Middletown is a highly-controlled process that offers a supportive way of working with young people to repair harm caused in the incident, outside of the court system.

We address underlying issues and believe this process gives us the best chance to focus on accountability, conflict resolution, repairing relationships, and to work with youth to resolve the situation and support their long-term success.

What makes this process different from court?

Our Diversion process recognizes the importance of supporting youth and families in individualized ways. Our work with youth and families is guided by the *International Institute of Restorative Practice's* theory that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather to or for them.

We take a "with" approach, involving youth and families in every step of the process.

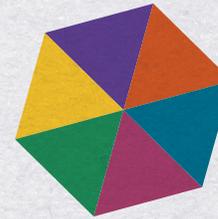
DIVERSION IS A 3 STEP PROCESS



STEP 1: Intake One-on-One

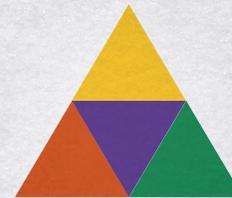
Youth and their parent(s) / legal guardian(s) **ATTEND AN INTAKE** with the Diversion Coordinator. During this meeting we:

- Explain the diversion process.
- Answer any questions the youth & family may have.
- Gather information to get to know the youth & family.
- Discuss the incident that resulted in an arrest.
- Outline the next steps using the restorative questions and prepare for your *Circle Discussion*.



STEP 2: Circle Discussion

Next, you will meet with the members of the Diversion Team. At this meeting, we will talk about the incident using the restorative questions. Then, we will work together to develop **AN AGREEMENT**, seeking input and agreement from everyone in the room. The agreement outlines what the youth will need to do in order to successfully complete the Diversion process.



STEP 3: On-Going Support

Six months after the Diversion meeting, you'll return for a **CHECK-OUT MEETING** to provide us with an update of how everything is going. The main goal of this meeting is to see if there are other ways MYDT and MYSB can be helpful at that time.

Follow-up after the check-out meeting is guided by the youth's agreement, however youth and families are encouraged to reach out with questions, concerns, or additional needs whenever they may come up.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS



Throughout the diversion process, success is built on accountability, development of skills, and connecting to our community. We believe these three areas of influence help youth achieve success not only in our process but also throughout their lives...and that's the real goal!

An agreement may be built on any or all of the following three things:

▶ Accountability

We want youth to feel a sense of pride in completing their MYDT agreement, which is why they are a part of every decision and action. This way, we put our focus on building up youth, not on punishing them.

In our Diversion process, *accountability* means repairing harm by addressing and meeting the needs of those who have been affected by the incident. When possible, we support mending relationships through restorative circles or conferences with those who have been harmed.

▶ Skill Building

We want to help youth discover and develop the skills that can help them make decisions that lead to positive outcomes.

We focus on identifying the root causes of behaviors and which areas of skill building that we can grow together, all in hopes of avoiding a similar incident in the future.

We recognize that additional supports might be needed to help build those skills. As part of our process, we have connected youth & families to mental/behavioral health services such as individual, family, and group counseling & mentoring.

Also, each diversion participant typically attends an experiential learning program that focuses on building decision making skills, thought process, frustration tolerance, problem solving, and overall reflection on what factored into their arrest.

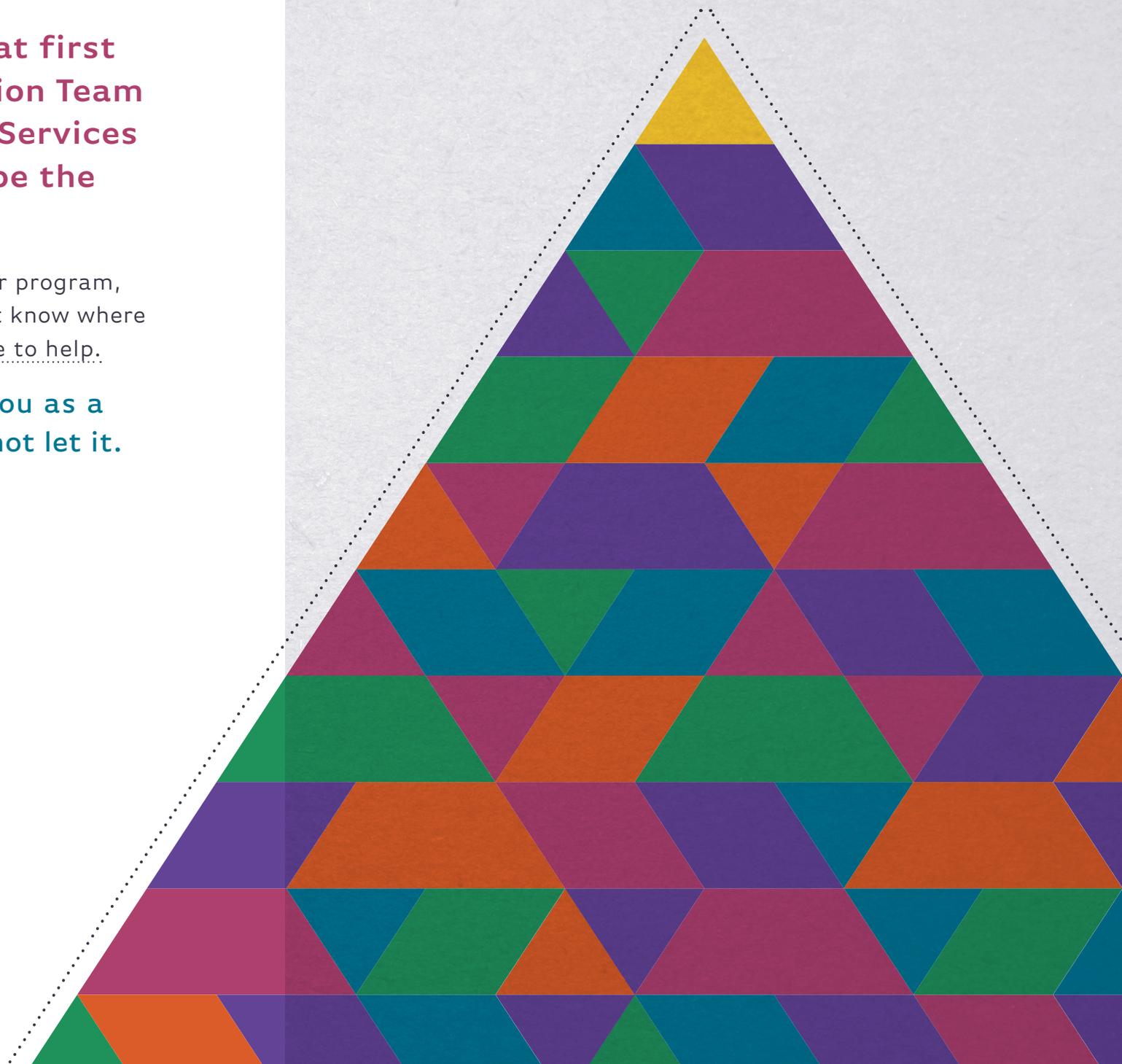
▶ Connection

One of our core beliefs is that all youth have incredible strengths. We believe in the importance of identifying and activating those strengths not only to help navigate challenges, but also to connect youth to pro-social activities where they can thrive. We also believe in the power of relationships and connecting youth to individuals they trust in the community so that when they are faced with a challenge or have a need, they know they don't have to face it alone.

While an arrest may be what first connects you to the Diversion Team and the Middletown Youth Services Bureau, it doesn't have to be the only way you know us.

Whether you are looking for a service or program, are struggling with something and don't know where to turn, or just need to talk—we're here to help.

Don't let one mistake define you as a person. Let's work together to not let it.

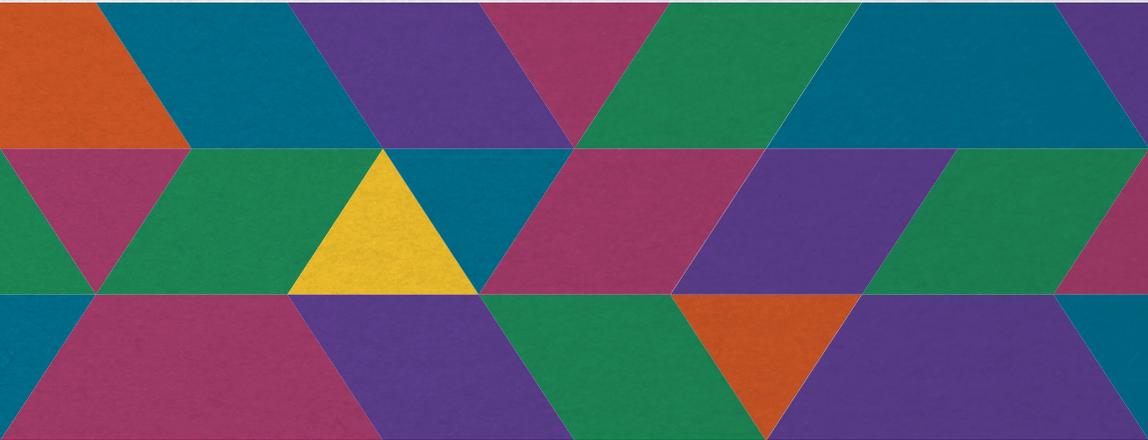


CONTACT MYDT

PHONE 860.854.6030

EMAIL diversion@middletownct.gov

ADDRESS Middletown Youth Services Bureau
372 Hunting Hill Avenue
Middletown, CT 06457



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

MYSB's mission is simple: support youth and families however we can. We are involved in everything from prevention to intervention and operate at the individual, family, group, and community level. Our work focuses on youth justice, mental health, civic engagement for teens, and we believe that the best results only happen through partnerships.

Follow us for news & updates:



For more programs and opportunities visit:

MiddletownYouthConnections.org