Youth detention homes can be seen as dilemmatic institutional settings, for instance in that they deliver forced care. This dissertation explores treatment practices and staff-youth interaction at a detention home for young men. In focus are institutional ideological dilemmas and how these are tied to identity constructs, or subject positions. The study combines a Foucauldian perspective on discourse, power and subjectivity with interactional perspectives, exploring both what subject positions that are available in this treatment context, and how these are taken up and negotiated in social interaction. The empirical studies zoom in on treatment dilemmas, in particular that of coercion vs. freedom, that is, the tension between the conflicting institutional goals of coercing residents into norm abiding behavior and of producing individuals who behave “properly” out of their own free will. Furthermore, the three studies explore and document the rhetorical resources deployed by staff members and youths, when navigating treatment dilemmas. These include, for example, disciplinary humor and strategic deployment of subject positions such as young boy-caregiver rather than delinquent-disciplinarian. In brief, the dissertation shows that subject positions are essentially co-constructed, and that positions related to age are highly relevant in this institutional setting. Paradoxical aspects of subject positions provide discursive resources that can be deployed to navigate ideological dilemmas such as that of coercion vs. freedom, but also to handle issues of authenticity.