PENNSYLVANIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

Achieving Our Balanced and Restorative Justice Mission Through Evidence-Based Policy and Practice

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FOREWORD

The world around us is rapidly changing. Knowledge is growing at an exponential rate. New processes leading to improved outcomes are routinely generated. These changes are affecting all aspects of our lives, including juvenile justice. New assessment tools, interviewing techniques, community-based interventions, and practitioner tools are constantly emerging and improving. Today's professional is challenged to keep abreast of these changes and to integrate this knowledge and innovation in day-to-day practice. Like a whitewater rafting experience, the fast-paced waters can make one uneasy and exhilarated at the same time. Today, there is an undeniable sense of anticipation, a realization that the strategic application of these research findings can produce—will produce—outcomes that make communities safer. A similar sense of expectancy was stirring in the 1990s, when Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system embraced its balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) mission. From this BARJ effort came many improvements including, but not limited to, a greater emphasis on the needs of victims, community participation in addressing the consequences of delinquency, and a readiness to determine how the justice system could partner with others to repair harm caused by illegal activity.

The goals of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) align with those of BARJ. JJSES seeks to reduce harm by applying the best-known research to the principles and goals of BARJ. Using actuarial assessment tools, cognitive behavioral interventions, and performance measures to make incremental improvements, and addressing not just the youthful offender but the entire family, are just a few ways that JJSES supports a BARJ mission of reduced harm.

JJSES is a "from the bottom up" initiative. In recent years, various counties throughout Pennsylvania have been adopting evidence-based practices. However, those efforts have been loosely supported and uncoordinated from a statewide perspective. It was recognized that evidence-based practices would advance more quickly and comprehensively if the counties received support. Through the leadership and collaborative partnership of three agencies—the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency—the JJSES initiative was launched.

This initiative provides juvenile justice stakeholders with training, technical assistance, literature, web-based support documents, and overall guidance. The purpose of this Monograph is to provide these stakeholders with practical information on how daily practices can be improved to achieve better juvenile justice outcomes. The Monograph divides and groups the implementation activities of JJSES into four stages. Support resources for each stage are identified.

A heartfelt appreciation is extended to the dozens of individuals who contributed to the development of this Monograph. The many hours of spirited debate and sacrifice have produced what we hope will be a roadmap to achieve and improve upon the outcomes so clearly articulated in our BARJ mission.

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A WORD ABOUT VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES

The reader may notice that while the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) emphasizes those processes related to reducing the risk of reoffense and enhancing public safety, little direct reference is made to victims or communities. This Monograph purposefully highlights the research and subsequent key activities needed to achieve a reduction in victimization and thereby advance safer communities. By doing so, it enhances the ability to achieve our balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) mission. The activities, processes, products, and outputs described in this Monograph are designed to achieve greater community protection for the citizens of Pennsylvania through reduced recidivism.

One of the benefits of a balanced and restorative justice mission is that it does not pit one stakeholder group against another (i.e., victim against juvenile, community against victim, or juvenile against community). Instead, the true spirit of BARJ is demonstrated when each affected party's need is attended to and future harm is diminished. We are excited about the potential implications that a successful application of JJSES can achieve: fewer victims, safer communities, and youth who gain prosocial competencies and who contribute to their families and communities.

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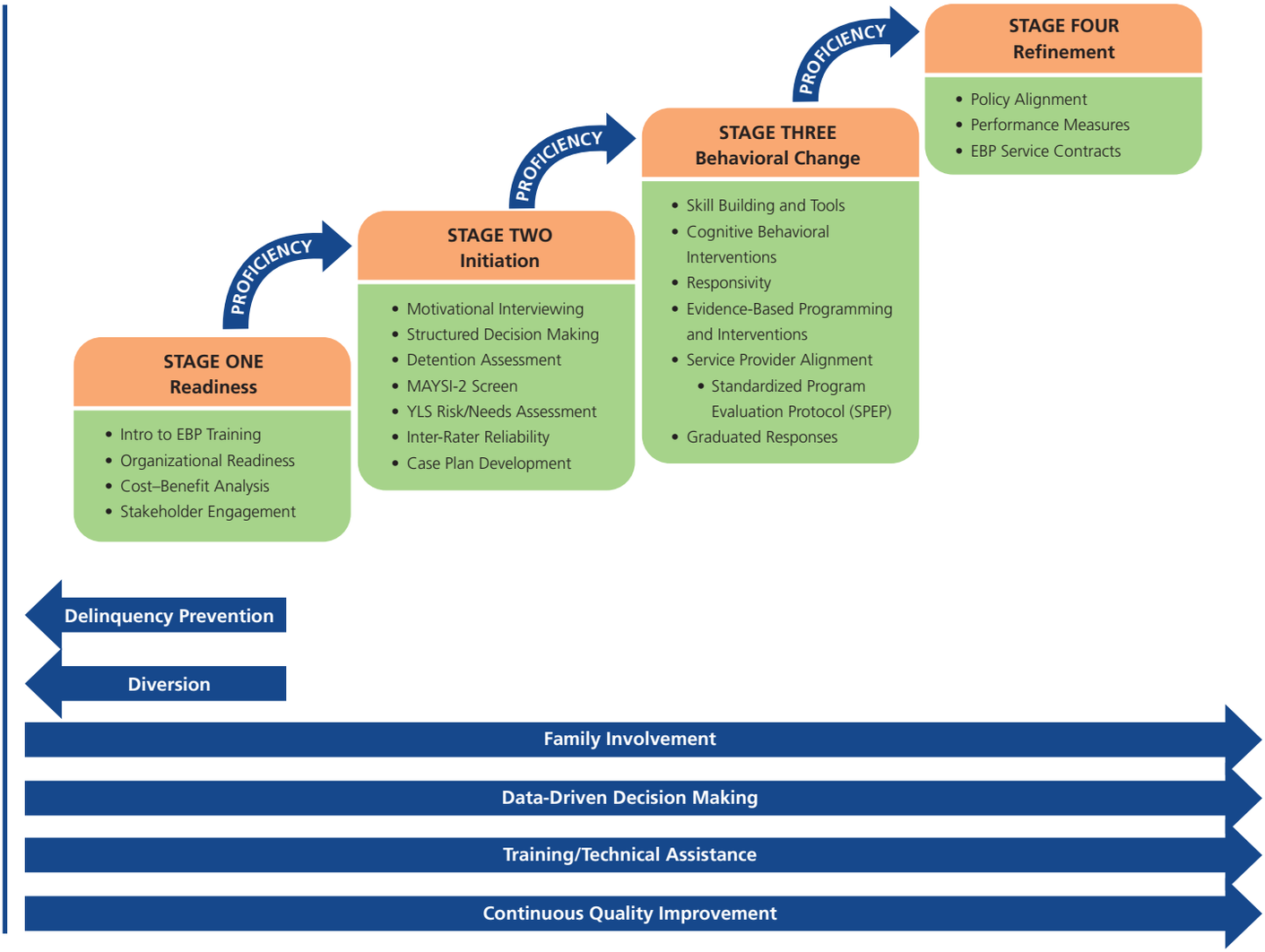
PENNSYLVANIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY: A MONOGRAPH

Welcome to the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) Monograph. This document is designed to assist juvenile justice stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth in implementing strategies that are grounded in evidence-based practices (EBP) and that aim to enhance youth's competencies and to change youthful behavior that leads to unlawful acts. Consistent with Pennsylvania's balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) mission, EBP seeks to prevent delinquency and out-of-home placement by working with juveniles to reduce their risk of recidivism and to enhance those protective factors that result in a law-abiding life. JJSES is the framework within which EBP will become a reality in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. It consists of four stages of implementation:



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This Monograph is divided into four sections that match the Framework's stages:

- Stage One: Readiness
- Stage Two: Initiation
- Stage Three: Behavioral Change
- Stage Four: Refinement.

Each of these sections includes short descriptions of the tasks to be accomplished at each stage, background information about the purpose of the tasks, and helpful hints about how to achieve them.

Other steps involved in implementing the JJSES Framework—ones that cut across all stages—are included in the final section of the Monograph, "Key JJSES Building Blocks." These include

- delinquency prevention
- diversion
- family involvement
- data-driven decision making
- training/technical assistance
- continuous quality improvement.

We hope that you find this Monograph useful in implementing evidence-based practices to achieve the goals of balanced and restorative justice. It is meant to provide you with guidance, tips, and resources that will help you as you work with juveniles to prevent delinquency, avoid over-reliance on detention, and reduce recidivism for the benefit of all who live and work in the Commonwealth.

Evidence-Based Practice Defined

"Evidence-based practice" simply means applying what we know in terms of research to what we do in our work with youth, their families, and the communities in which we live. It is the progressive, organizational use of direct, current scientific evidence to guide and inform efficient and effective services. It is through the use of research evidence and the demonstration of outcomes that Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system can achieve and confirm the effectiveness of its BARJ mission.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO PENNSYLVANIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

As a national leader in juvenile justice, Pennsylvania has an ongoing commitment to improving its balanced and restorative justice outcomes through innovation and vision, strong partnerships at both the state and local levels, and cooperation with both public and private sector service providers. Most recently, between 2005 and 2010, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation selected Pennsylvania as the first state in the country to participate in its Models for Change initiative. Virtually all components of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system were engaged, in some way, in system reform.

Pennsylvania's Models for Change reform efforts focused on three targeted areas of improvement: coordinating the mental health and juvenile justice systems, improving aftercare services and supports for youth and their families, and addressing disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system. Models for Change accelerated the pace of Pennsylvania's previous efforts at reform at both the state and local levels, and supported various evidence-based practices, such as the introduction of screening and assessment instruments. A number of juvenile probation departments began working toward implementing a valid and reliable risk/needs instrument, developing a case plan model to address the identified risks and needs, and providing targeted evidence-based interventions.

In June 2010, with the five-year commitment of the MacArthur Foundation drawing to a close, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) staff agreed, at their annual strategic planning meeting, that the "Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy" (JJSES) was needed, both to consolidate the gains of the previous five years "under one roof" and to develop strategies to sustain and enhance those efforts.

Pennsylvania's JJSES rests on two interlinked foundations: the best empirical research available in the field of juvenile justice and a set of core beliefs about how to put this research into practice. These beliefs assert that

- children should be diverted from formal court processing whenever appropriate
- meeting the needs of victims is an important goal of the juvenile justice system
- we need to develop and maintain strong partnerships with service providers
- we can, and should, do a better job of involving families in all that we do.

To these ends, a JJSES coordinator was appointed, a leadership team was created, and The Carey Group, Inc. was retained to begin developing an implementation strategy.

One year later, the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University selected Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as one of four sites in the nation to participate in its Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP).[1] The JJSIP assists states in improving outcomes for juvenile offenders by better translating knowledge on "what works" into everyday policy and practice—an approach very consistent with Pennsylvania's JJSES. Pennsylvania intends to incorporate "lessons learned" from Berks County's participation in the JJSIP into the statewide Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy.

Pennsylvania's JJSES rests on two interlinked foundations: the best empirical research available in the field of juvenile justice and a set of core beliefs about how to put this research into practice.

BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

One of the most significant reforms in the history of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system occurred in 1995, when the purpose of the system was fundamentally redefined during a special legislative session on crime. The Juvenile Act now states that the purpose of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is

"… to provide for children committing delinquent acts programs of supervision, care, and rehabilitation which provide balanced

1 The JJSIP takes the vast amount of knowledge gained through Dr. Mark Lipsey's meta-analysis of effective juvenile justice programs, which he translated into the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP), and embeds it within the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*, developed by Dr. James C. Howell and John Wilson. (For more information on this approach, please refer to *Improving the Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Programs: A New Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice* by Mark Lipsey et al.)

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attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed, and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community."

So how does Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy correspond to the principles of balanced and restorative justice—the foundation upon which our juvenile justice system is built? Simply put, JJSES emphasizes the use of research evidence to achieve one of the core BARJ objectives: increasing youth skills (competency development) in order to reduce the likelihood that those involved in the juvenile justice system will commit delinquent acts in the future.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The first concrete step in developing Pennsylvania's JJSES was to create a Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose was designed to reflect the underlying goals of BARJ and of the JJSES initiative:

- enhancing the capacity of our juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission through the implementation of evidence-based practices
- demonstrating an ongoing commitment to data collection, analysis, and research
- demonstrating a commitment to continuous quality improvement in every aspect of the system.

A significant and growing number of state agencies, statewide organizations, and service providers have endorsed the Statement of Purpose. If your department or organization has not yet endorsed the Statement of Purpose for JJSES, we invite you to do so.

JJSES Statement of Purpose

We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission by

- employing evidence-based practices with fidelity at every stage of the juvenile justice process;
- collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts; and, with this knowledge,
- striving to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services, and programs.

The Nexus Between Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) and JJSES

Act 33 of Special Session No. 1 of 1995 amended the purpose clause of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act to establish balanced and restorative justice as the philosophical and theoretical framework for Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. The statute clearly defined three goals for Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system:

- the protection of the community
- the imposition of accountability for offenses committed
- the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community.

Since the statute's enactment, juvenile justice agencies throughout the Commonwealth have devoted a great deal of time and resources to implement policies, practices, and programs that advance BARJ and to accomplish the goals embodied in Act 33. To enhance and support these efforts, the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy emphasizes the following:

- **The use of research-based evidence to guide the development of policy and practice in all aspects of BARJ:** Evidence-based practices is a mindset or way of going about the business of juvenile justice. New information is constantly challenging existing processes and providing opportunities for improved outcomes. Evidence should be used to help guide practitioners' actions, whether those actions are to protect the community from further harm, restore the harm done to victims and the community, or redeem youth involved in the system.
- **The application of evidence-based research to protect the community from further harm by reducing rearrest and recidivism rates for youth involved in the juvenile justice system through a process of behavioral change:** Ultimately, juveniles must take full responsibility for their past actions and gain the motivation and competencies to change their conduct in the future. Probation officers, treatment providers, family members, and other prosocial people in the lives of juveniles must take advantage of the best available research and knowledge as they work to reach these goals.

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THE APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO JUVENILE JUSTICE

Juvenile justice organizations around the world are moving to align their programs and services with what has become known as evidence-based practice (EBP). Starting in the medical profession two decades ago, EBP asserts that public policy and practice should be based on the best available scientific evidence in order to effectively achieve stated goals and efficiently use taxpayers' dollars. Failure to match services to rigorous, evidentiary standards not only makes poor use of limited public funds but can even lead to an exacerbation of the problems and issues that government seeks to resolve. In the juvenile justice context, research has demonstrated that the proper implementation of EBP can lead to significant reductions in juvenile delinquency and recidivism.

RESTORATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY ARE THE GOALS

Juvenile justice interventions and programs are considered effective when they reduce a juvenile's risk to reoffend. In this context, the application of evidence-based practices translates directly into enhanced public safety. The research over the last two decades is both clear and compelling regarding those interventions that result in reduced recidivism. Juvenile probation departments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must adopt the principles of EBP in order to achieve their stated mission of repairing harm to victims, restoring the health and welfare of communities, and enabling juveniles to become productive and law-abiding members of society.

KEY CONCEPTS IN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: THE RISK, NEEDS, AND RESPONSIVITY PRINCIPLES

The *risk principle* refers to the probability that a youth will reoffend, based on characteristics that are correlated with future delinquency. These risk factors are static, or non-changeable. They include, for example, current age, age at first arrest, and number of prior arrests. Risk information is used to classify juveniles for purposes of supervision and to determine the level of external control and treatment required during that supervision.

The *need principle* defines the juvenile's individual and environmental attributes that are predictive of future delinquent behavior and that can be changed (i.e., that are dynamic in nature). These are known as criminogenic needs. Examples of criminogenic needs include antisocial attitudes and beliefs, antisocial peers, temperament issues (such as impulsivity and poor problem-solving and decision-making skills), lack of family support, substance abuse, lack of education, and lack of prosocial leisure outlets. In order to reduce the probability of delinquency and recidivism, a juvenile's criminogenic needs must be accurately assessed and then effectively addressed through individual supervision and programmatic interventions. The primary tool for formally establishing, tracking, and documenting the accomplishment of these goals is a comprehensive case plan that describes the steps that must be taken by the juvenile probation officer, service provider, and juvenile to reduce the risk of recidivism.

The *responsivity principle* emphasizes the importance of characteristics that influence a juvenile's ability and motivation to learn. Individual traits that interfere with—or facilitate—learning are known as "responsivity factors." The basic assumption underlying the responsivity principle is that all juveniles and all programs are not the same. As such, better treatment outcomes will result from properly matching a young person's individual characteristics (e.g., culture, cognitive ability, maturity, and gender) with service characteristics (e.g., location, structure, length, dosage, methodology, and facilitator traits).

In short, the risk principle helps identify *who* should receive juvenile justice interventions and treatment. The need principle focuses on *what* about the young person must be addressed. The responsivity principle underscores the importance of *how* treatment should be delivered, with behavioral and cognitive behavioral skill-building techniques being the most effective.

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THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

There are eight evidence-based principles for effective intervention with juveniles:

Eight Principles	In Practitioners' Language
Assess risk/needs using actuarial instruments	**Use assessments** to guide case decisions by applying actuarial and statistically valid tools that describe the *who* (which juveniles will most likely require interventions), the *what* (which specific needs must be addressed to reduce reoffense), and the *how* (how to match interventions with an individual's traits) of supervision.
Enhance intrinsic motivation	**Get juveniles treatment-ready** and keep them engaged by using motivational interviewing, strength-based approaches, and rewards and sanctions.
Target interventions	**Apply a laser-like focus on the criminogenic factors** that are proven to be linked to future delinquency, and work to enhance those protective factors that act as barriers against delinquent behavior. Pay attention to youths' responsivity factors, including developmental age, gender, ethnic and cultural background, and learning style.
Develop skills through directed practice	**Use behavioral and cognitive behavioral techniques** to help medium and high-risk juveniles learn thinking patterns, skills, and behaviors that can reduce their risk of recidivism. Train juvenile probation officers and service providers to reinforce, in the community and family, new skills that youth have learned in treatment groups.
Increase positive reinforcement	**Use rewards and incentives** to encourage prosocial attitudes and behavior. Seek to provide four to six positive affirmations for every message of disapproval.
Engage ongoing support in natural communities	**Strengthen the influence of prosocial communities** in juveniles' lives, and support the ability of families to assist youth as they learn prosocial values, attitudes, beliefs, and skills.
Measure relevant processes and practices	Ensure that the department is **routinely measuring** and documenting key indicators that inform individual staff members and the department whether programs and services are being implemented with sufficient quality and whether intended changes are occurring. The identification of these outcome measurements is foundational to evidence-based organizations.
Provide measurement feedback	**Use data to provide feedback and make adjustments**. Outcomes will more likely be improved when feedback is offered to those individuals providing services, developing policy, and managing staff.

THE DAY-TO-DAY APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES

From a criminogenic risk perspective: The evidence is clear that low-risk juveniles should be given the least amount of attention because they are already largely connected to prosocial communities and are likely to be self-correcting. Juvenile justice intervention beyond arrest and prosecution will likely only increase the probability of reoffense for this population. Medium and high-risk youth are much more likely to respond positively to interventions, if administered correctly. The intensity of treatment

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programs should be matched to each person's risk level, with higher dosages, lengths, and intensities applied to higher-risk offenders.

Therefore, in terms of supervision and treatment, the juvenile justice system should

- **use minimal intervention with low-risk juveniles.** Supervision staff should manage the risk of reoffense but avoid vigorously applying juvenile justice system interventions to low-risk juveniles unless individual traits change, resulting in a youth's increased risk level. Interventions should be the least restrictive in nature.
- **maximize accountability with extremely high-risk juveniles.** Employ techniques such as surveillance, electronic monitoring, curfew, and police–probation partnerships to control the risk. These youths' risk levels can be reduced through the strategic application of interventions that match their risk (i.e., interventions become more intensive as risk increases), criminogenic needs, and responsivity traits (e.g., learning disabilities, mental health, gender), but they may need external control until these interventions take hold.
- **focus programs and services specifically on medium and high-risk juveniles.** Levels of risk can especially be reduced for medium and high-risk juveniles by applying appropriately matched services and supervision.

From a criminogenic need perspective: Traits that are delinquency-influencing and changeable should be targeted for intervention. Attention to non-criminogenic needs will not yield positive recidivism results and may even do harm.

From a responsivity perspective: Interventions should be closely matched to each individual's unique qualities and attempts should be made to increase the youth's intrinsic motivation to engage in behavior change. The most effective interventions create a match between a youth's traits, the characteristics of treatment, and the counselor/facilitator's attributes, and acknowledge the youth's current stage of change.

SUMMARY

The body of knowledge that serves as the foundation for evidence-based practices in juvenile justice (Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Barnoski, 2004; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007) is both clear and convincing. Today, the challenge for juvenile justice policymakers and practitioners is not so much *what* should be done; scientific research has shed much light on this question over the past two decades. Instead, the challenge today lies in transforming our current system of juvenile justice from one based solely on gut instinct and officer experience to one that routinely uses research to inform practice and policy.

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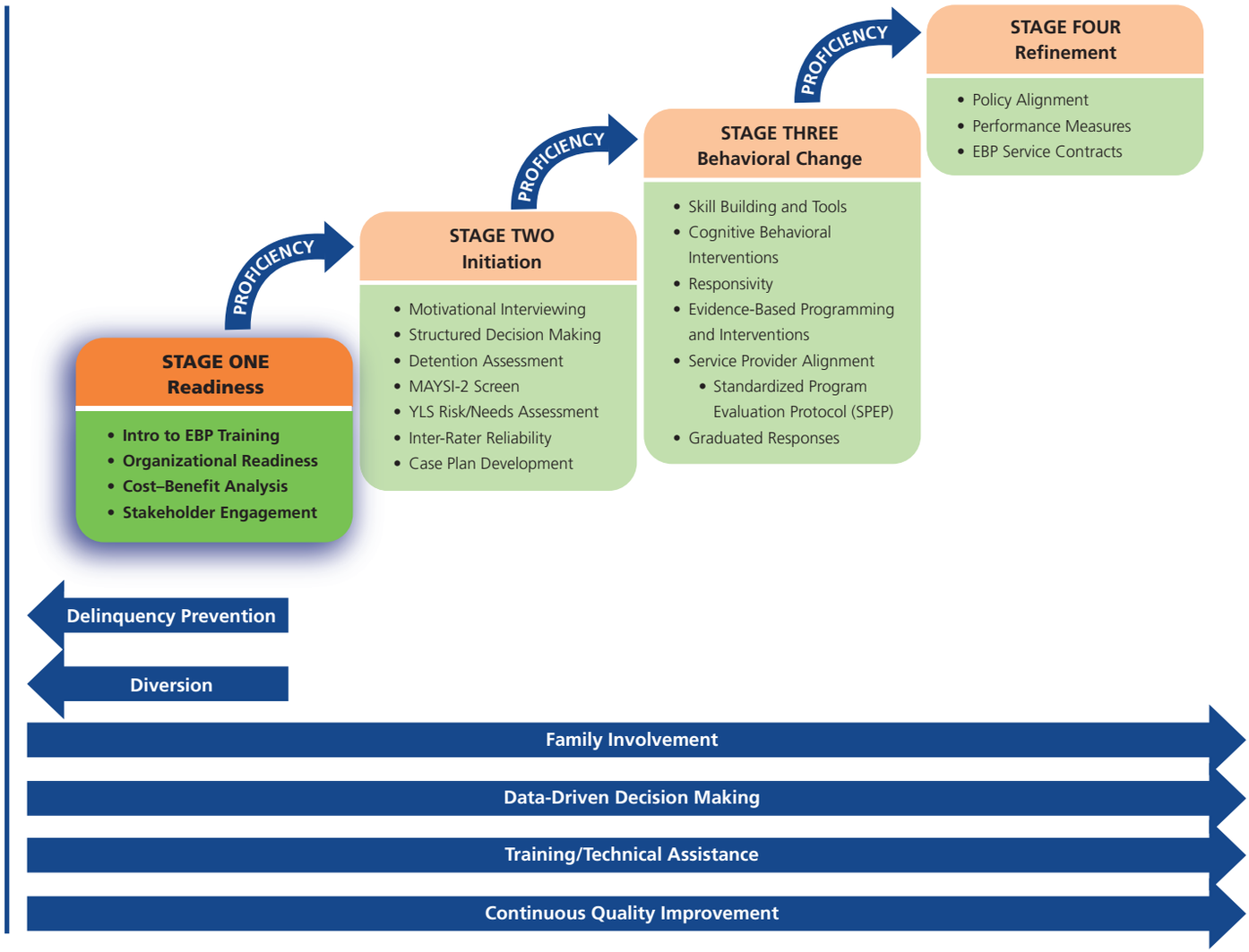
STAGE ONE: READINESS



"After all is said and done, there is no such thing as managing change. You lead change or you follow it."

Peter Drucker

Nearly 70 percent of all innovation and implementation initiatives in the public and private sectors fail. While new technologies, programs, and procedures are introduced on a daily basis, most efforts to make them a reality result in disappointment and frustration. Stage One of the Framework was crafted with this problem in mind. It recognizes that change is a long-term process—one that requires strategic and careful planning before an initiative truly begins.

A number of tasks are recommended to help ensure a successful launch of JJSES. Some of these tasks include preparing and engaging juvenile probation staff and stakeholders by

- informing them of the JJSES model, anticipated tasks and timelines, and ways in which the juvenile justice and service delivery system may change

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- providing training about research that could guide practice
- setting up a planning process that allows stakeholders to help shape the local JJSES plan.

In addition, local probation departments are urged to take an honest look at their readiness to undertake a change initiative. If conditions are not conducive to moving forward, the JJSES effort will likely not succeed, and attempts to reinitiate it later could be resisted by those who view the first effort as flawed. One way to understand and cope with these preliminary conditions is to conduct an organizational readiness-to-change analysis, referred to here as a "cost–benefit analysis," to increase awareness of the amount of time and effort that will be required to implement all four stages of the JJSES initiative.

INTRODUCTION TO EBP TRAINING

In order to determine a department's or juvenile justice system's readiness to proceed with evidence-based practices, the department must know what EBP is and what it entails. Many departments mistakenly view EBP as applying an actuarial risk/needs instrument, as if it were a singular event. While implementing a risk/needs assessment is foundational to evidence-based practices, it is just one activity. A department needs to know the totality of what it is committing to in order to successfully implement change.

Conducting an "Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices" training session is a key part of preparing for JJSES. This one-day training should be designed to ground participants in the *what* and *why* of EBP. It provides basic knowledge about evidence-based and risk reduction research and explores how the principles of risk, need, and responsivity are relevant to decisions made by staff (e.g., how intensively to supervise the youth, which criminogenic needs to target for case management, and how to customize the approach based on the youth's unique traits) and other juvenile justice system stakeholders (e.g., who should be eligible for diversion, what dispositional conditions to impose, how to handle violations, and how court reports might be structured). An "Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices" does not provide training in how to apply this knowledge, but it reviews why such application is needed. It is the foundation upon which all other training is built.

Lessons learned about EBP implementation suggest that probation departments should take a staged approach to staff development. Staff often have difficulty accepting and integrating knowledge and skills acquired through training when they have not received the appropriate prerequisite training. Just as one has to learn how to walk before running or to swim before SCUBA diving, one has to understand the risk principle before being asked to use an actuarial assessment instrument. There is an important sequence that must be followed when providing training to staff. Following this sequence will increase the likelihood that staff will be receptive to new information, adopt and adapt to new practices and approaches, and retain information and skills for a longer period of time.

If juvenile justice system stakeholders seem reluctant to embrace an evidence-based practices model, the juvenile probation department may want to reevaluate its strategy regarding JJSES implementation. It may want to take more time collecting outcome information, examining other jurisdictions' experiences, and understanding EBP's potential benefit before making a concerted push toward JJSES.

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

Implementing JJSES and the principles of evidence-based practices that underlie it requires juvenile justice organizations to modify their way of doing business in order to be successful. Unfortunately, research shows that this is not an easy task, as demonstrated by implementation failure rates of 70 percent or more for new initiatives. These dismal rates make the very idea of change daunting.

The reasons for failure are fairly common, including a lack of department resources, an overreliance on the status quo, high workloads, a lack of will on the part of leadership, and stakeholder reluctance. Organizations can avoid these pitfalls and maximize the potential for successfully implementing JJSES/EBP by using readiness assessment tools. These tools help department leadership determine whether the climate of their organization is conducive to change, since an unsuccessful change effort will only lead to more difficult hurdles later when change is attempted again.

Fortunately, a myriad of experiences by other jurisdictions implementing system improvements point to factors that increase the likelihood of successful change efforts. A department will be more likely to successfully implement a change effort if its leadership is firmly committed to change, if direct service staff is convinced that change is necessary, if there is agreement that EBP is the right strategic fit, and if implementing the change will result in improvements that are relevant to staff's individual

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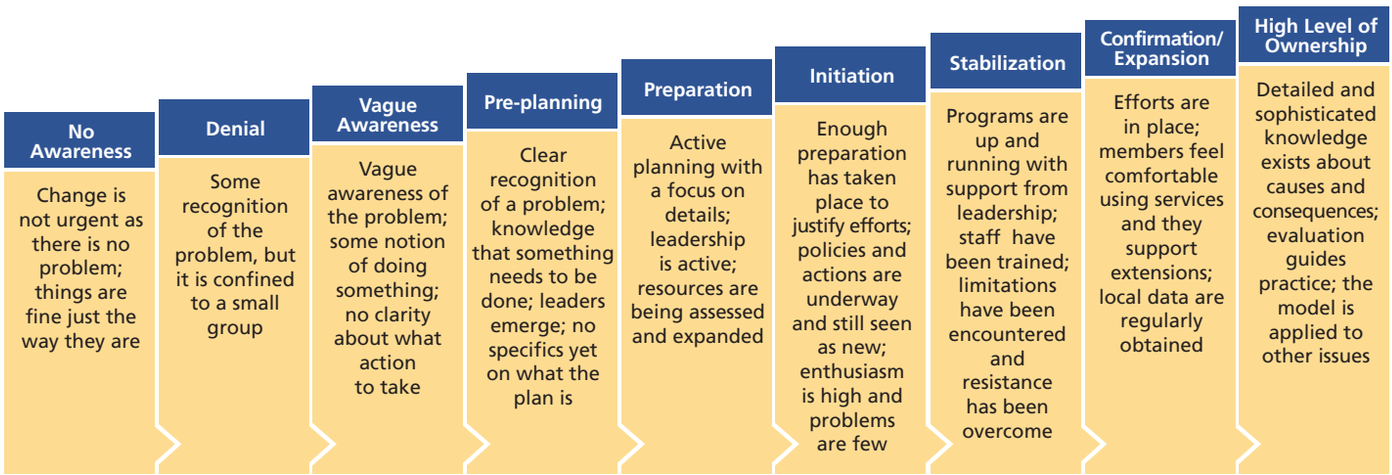
COMMUNITY READINESS MODEL



needs. Departments that simply pile EBP activities onto an existing pool of activities run the risk of marginalizing the importance of EBP initiatives.

> "Whenever there is a complex problem, there is a simple, fast, and wrong solution."
>
> Author unknown

Before starting a major change process, there should be a "gut check." That is, leadership should revisit its core BARJ mission[2] and be clear about what its primary function is, decide whether EBP gets the department closer to that function, and determine what trade-offs may be required to put in motion EBP activities. There needs to be a "strategic fit" between these new practices and what the department ultimately intends to accomplish with its resources. If this fit is not clear or if there is not a willingness to make choices that may require redirecting resources, the department should rethink how it wants to move forward with JJSES.

Just as important is how well an organization functions and performs. According to Rensis Likert's research (1967), there are a few areas within an organization that need to be high-functioning in order for a change effort to be successful. Some of them include good communication "up and down" the chain of command, shared values, support for the mission, effective use of rewards, effective leadership, and shared responsibility. Indeed, research on implementation readily supports the concept of addressing shortcomings before initiating system enhancement activities. Without this preparation, departments are more likely to experience perfunctory change "on paper" instead of actual modified staff activities (Rogers, Wellins, & Conner, 2002).

JJSES has developed a set of activities and products to help jurisdictions determine their readiness for change. One of them is an organizational readiness survey. This survey should be taken by all levels of an organization to determine its strengths and weaknesses in terms of implementing change. Individuals rate certain aspects of the organization (e.g., communication and shared responsibility) on a scale, indicating the preferred level compared to the actual level. Small gap scores indicate strengths and readiness for change; large gap scores indicate weaknesses and areas that need attention before successful change initiatives can be maximized.

Edwards, Jumper-Thurman, Plested, Oetting, & Swanson (2000) developed a model of organizational readiness entitled the Community Readiness Model, as shown above. According to this model, communities tend to be in one of nine stages of readiness for change. Different strategies can be employed within each stage to improve change sustainability.

2 For more information on core missions, consider the concept of BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal), as described by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras in their book *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies.*

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While the Community Readiness Model is applied to community-based efforts, the concepts can be applied to organizations. Departments engaged in the JJSES initiative are encouraged to determine their current stage of readiness by comparing their condition with the characteristics of these nine stages. An action plan can then be put in place depending on which stage of change the department is in.

COST–BENEFIT ANALYSIS

One of the goals of the first stage of JJSES is to analyze what an EBP effort costs from human, political, mission, and fiscal points of view. Starting initiatives is relatively easy; sustaining them takes persistence and strategy. Organizational resources are finite and activities consume resources—especially attention and time. Attention spans can be short as new pressures, statutes, and directives are added to the list of urgent "must do's." In addition, a remarkable number of departments jump right into action only to find out later that they underestimated the requisite resources and did not foresee certain issues that ultimately threaten their efforts. This can result in expending precious time and goodwill without the benefit of advancing JJSES.[3]

While the organizational readiness assessment will help identify possible barriers to implementation, the cost–benefit analysis will help quantify the costs required to overcome these barriers and to make more informed decisions as to whether, when, and under what conditions to move ahead with JJSES. Some questions to consider include the following:

- What exactly do EBP and JJSES entail? What exactly are we committing to?
- How much time and what kinds of tools, resources, caseloads/workloads, and supports are needed to do it right?
- Are we committed to doing the hard work to make the necessary changes? Can we sustain the effort over a number of consecutive years?
- Do we have the right personnel in the right places?
- How and when might this effort be communicated to staff?
- How will we get input and buy-in from all levels of the organization and the juvenile justice system?
- Is this the right timing for us as a department? Do we have issues that we need to address first, such as morale, workload, or the immersion of too much recent change, before taking on yet another initiative?
- Do we have the information technology capacity to implement and monitor fidelity to EBP?
- How will we know if our current services are achieving positive outcomes and, if they are not, what is the cost/benefit of enhancing these services?
- What are the anticipated positive outcomes of EBP and JJSES from a public safety and risk reduction point of view?
- How will those risk reduction outcomes benefit potential victims, taxpayer costs, and our departments?
- Are there other benefits that should be anticipated, such as improved staff job satisfaction and morale?
- How might these changes benefit our working relationships with other stakeholders?

A cost–benefit guidebook will be made available to help you analyze your department and system capacities before significant action steps are taken. The guidebook will include a self-administered checklist to examine the likely personnel, political, and fiscal costs of full or partial JJSES implementation, as well as the potential benefits.

To conduct a cost–benefit analysis (especially to analyze the time and money required to implement JJSES), it is recommended that a work team made up of a diagonal slice of the department be put in place to examine the issues described above. This team might talk with other jurisdictions, read key documents from other departments that have implemented JJSES, and conduct a "field trip" to a department that has undertaken a similar effort and that can offer advice on what to do or not to do.

> "For every minute spent in organizing, an hour is earned."

Once staff are trained and the department decides to further explore the steps toward JJSES, a more detailed action plan is needed. This plan will identify what immediate next steps need to be taken to deal with the issues that arose from the readiness assessment and cost–benefit analysis, who will be responsible for these steps, and what will be put on hold until these first steps are completed. This plan should not be longer than roughly 18 months in duration. The landscape often changes within a year and a half; therefore, it is usually not useful to plan any

3 Implementation research by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor (2003) emphasizes the need to develop an understanding of the "big picture" when considering how JJSES may contribute to the intended benefits of public safety and risk reduction.

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further. Furthermore, despite best intentions, there are often unanticipated delays and changes in direction that will need to be attended to, making longer-term plans irrelevant.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The juvenile justice system is comprised of a constellation of individual stakeholders and departments, including victims, judges, prosecutors and defense counsel, probation officers, juveniles, families, the community, those responsible for government budgets, and departments that protect the rights of the accused, represent the needs of victims, ensure that the process is fair and in accordance with the law, and hold law violators accountable. Sometimes stakeholders' interests are similar; sometimes they are different and potentially conflicting. The success of JJSES is partially dependent on aligning the missions, intentions, understandings, and resources of the stakeholders. Research demonstrates that when system activities are driven by a unified purpose through collaboration, outcomes are improved (Adler, Kwon, & Heckscher, 2008; Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland, & Cunningham, 1998; Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Successful results are less likely to be achieved when stakeholders are pulling in different directions.

JJSES proposes that all stakeholders rally around a unifying principle: harm reduction. The principle of harm reduction aligns with BARJ principles, as demonstrated by its targeted outcomes of safer and stronger communities, fewer victims, reduced delinquency rates, improved confidence in the juvenile justice system, and reduced taxpayer costs. To ensure that the entire juvenile justice system and its community partners work together to achieve these outcomes, certain processes must be implemented, including

- sharing, in a user-friendly way, research evidence that supports evidence-based practices
- establishing a set of common performance measures
- conducting a service gap assessment
- engaging in continuous quality improvement.

The cultures of juvenile justice systems differ across counties. In some, the courts, service providers, and other stakeholders are actively involved in helping shape juvenile justice policy. In others, stakeholders prefer to support initiatives without a significant role in shaping them. Facilitators of a JJSES process will want to take this matter into account when assessing juvenile justice system readiness and developing action plans.

SUMMARY

A department's action plan should contain a sufficient amount of detail, such as how to restructure caseloads, whether to specialize, how to handle the various offender populations based on risk level, what strategies to put in place to involve stakeholders, how to conduct a service gap analysis, and how to get the service provider community involved and aligned with EBP. Just as importantly, the action plan should include follow-up steps from the organizational readiness survey.

The following sequence of events summarizes the recommendations for Stage One:

Survey
- Conduct an organizational readiness survey.
- Review the results and, if necessary, develop a follow-up plan to address score gaps.

Train
- Hold introductory training on evidence-based practices and JJSES.
- Examine the experiences of others who have initiated EBP.
- Educate local stakeholders about evidence-based practices and make an initial judgment as to their relative support.

Analyze and Plan
- Complete a cost–benefit analysis of JJSES.
- If the benefits outweigh the costs, develop an initial 18-month plan.

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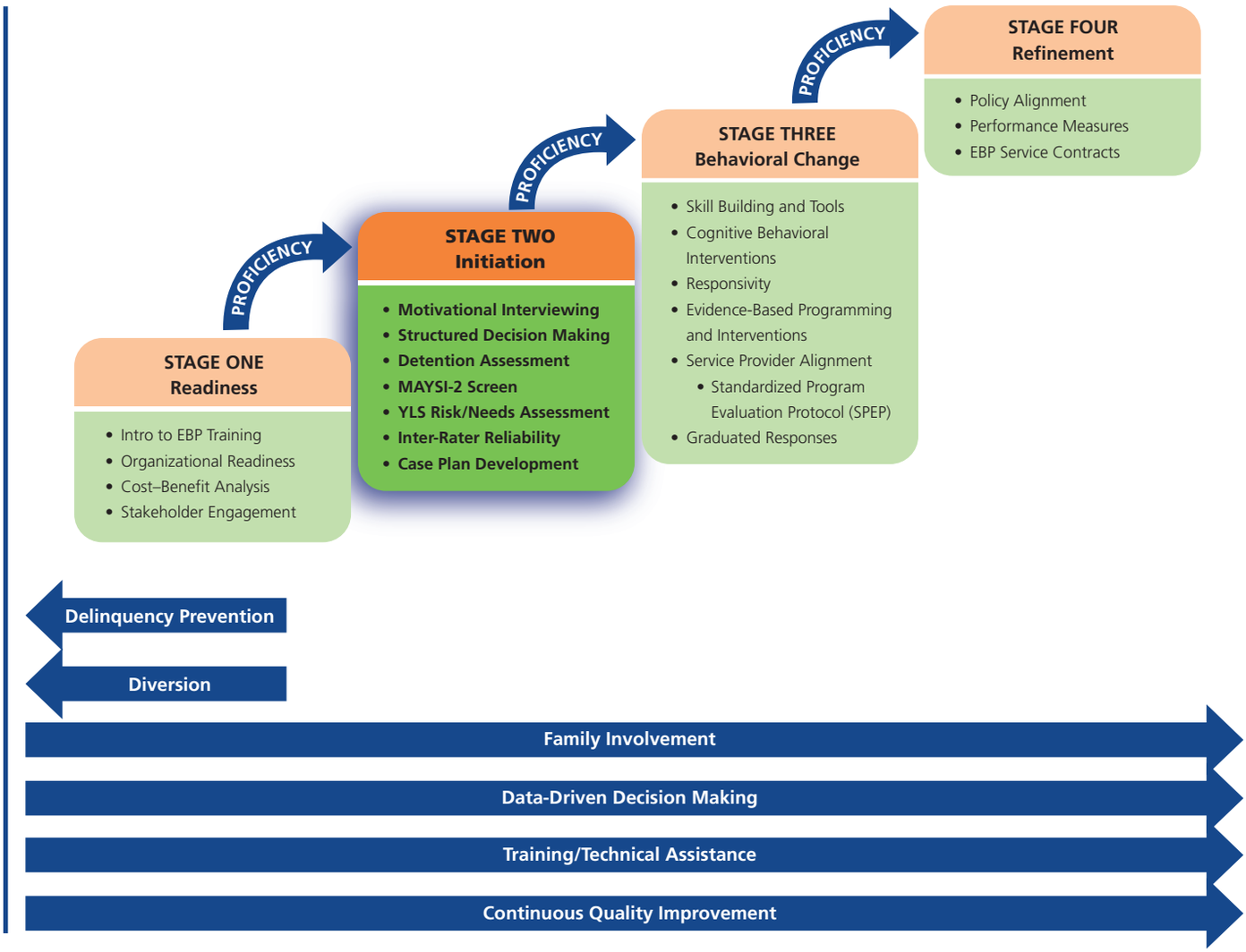
STAGE TWO: INITIATION



"Long-range vision and strategic planning are great tools, but we need to get some things done before lunch."

Author unknown

After a department has adequately prepared itself and its stakeholders for the JJSES change initiative, Stage Two: Initiation can begin. This stage helps departments prepare for behavioral change practices that are effective in reducing the risk to reoffend. These practices are identified in Stage Three.

During the assessment process, a number of actuarial tools are used that more accurately identify the needs of youth. These tools identify a juvenile's risk to reoffend, criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs, and the appropriate level of supervision. They are not meant to replace decision-makers' discretion; rather, they are intended to help guide and inform decisions related to detention, diversion, disposition, violations, and referrals for service. The importance of these assessments cannot be overstated; they are significantly more effective at identifying risk and need than professional judgment alone. However, they

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will only remain valid assessments if there is a system in place to ensure quality through inter-rater reliability. Stage Two, therefore, includes procedures to ensure that all assessors utilize the tools properly in order to retain their predictive properties, thereby allowing decision makers to rely on the accuracy of the data.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

One of the most important skills introduced in Stage Two is motivational interviewing. This skill enhances the amount and quality of information collected during the assessment process and helps engage youth and families in creating their own case plans.

Originally described by William R. Miller in 1983 based on his experience in the addiction field, motivational interviewing is a "collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change" (Miller & Rollnick, 2009). It helps case managers explore and resolve their clients' ambivalence to change by focusing on motivational processes within individuals that facilitate change. It seeks to align individuals' own values with their concerns regarding change; as such, it is distinguished from coercive, externally controlled methods of motivating change.

Criminal and juvenile justice fields began using motivational interviewing in earnest approximately 20 years ago; its application has expanded as practitioners have noted how much more information is elicited when administered appropriately. Practitioners were frustrated at the ineffective results and unrewarding process derived from techniques such as lecturing, arguing, challenging, and threatening. Their experiences contradicted the prevailing view that motivation is a condition that wholly resides within an offender—that is, only an offender can motivate him/herself. That view, however, has been disputed through motivational interviewing research findings and field experience. Using an effective interviewing approach, probationers can be guided to positions where they literally talk themselves into change (Walters, Rotgers, Saunders, Wilkinson, & Towers, 2003). In fact, practitioners have discovered that motivational interviewing changes and strengthens their relationships with their probationers so that they become guides. This, in turn, helps move probation departments into the "business of behavior change" (Clark, Walters, Gingerich, & Meltzer, 2006). It elevates the officer's role from that of a mere observer and reporter of compliance to that of a professional with specialized skills to influence positive behavior change.

For most people, change is a process that unfolds over time. People can range from having no interest in making changes (precontemplation), to having some awareness or mixed feelings about change (contemplation), to preparing for change (preparation), to having recently begun to make changes (action), to maintaining changes over time (maintenance). Practitioners must adapt their style to meet their clients where they are in the change process.

Motivational interviewing does not address a skill deficit; it prepares probationers and their families for change. Furthermore, it helps establish a professional alliance—one in which juvenile justice professionals establish rapport and align their approach with probationers' goals. These outcomes set the stage for probation officers, probationers, and youths' families to work on the issues identified through the assessment and case planning sessions. For these reasons, JJSES places motivational interviewing in Stage Two: Initiation instead of in Stage Three: Behavioral Change.

To help counties establish effective motivational interviewing practices, JJSES will provide training, coaching, and continuous quality improvement assistance. It should be noted that it often takes years for staff to become proficient in motivational interviewing. County probation departments and their service providers should be prepared to attend to the required proficiency processes. Some of those processes include observing staff–youth sessions, providing booster trainings, conducting coaching sessions, and integrating motivational interviewing terminology and concepts into policies and practices.

STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING

System professionals must make key decisions at numerous points as youth move through Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. These decisions determine not only how a case will be processed but, ultimately, how youth, their families, victims, and the community will be impacted by and engaged in restorative practices. Decisions include whether to divert a case and, if so, at what point; whether to detain a youth pending further processing; whether to handle an allegation through informal or formal means; how to determine which services and what level of supervision should be incorporated into a disposition; whether placement out of the home is necessary and, if so, into what type of service; when to initiate a violation action; and when to appropriately close a case.

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A cornerstone of the juvenile justice system is the concept of fundamental fairness. In a most basic sense, this concept ensures that all youth are treated in the same manner under similar circumstances. The use of structured decision-making tools designed to help system professionals make consistent, appropriate, effective, and fundamentally fair decisions has increased dramatically in the juvenile justice system over the past number of years. These tools, which are based on the results of research, provide a protocol and framework that every worker can use in every case. Combined with the professional judgment of staff, they enhance the decision-making process. Examples of these tools include everything from simple decision-making "trees" to more involved and complex forms of screening and assessment tools. In Pennsylvania, many jurisdictions use tools such as detention risk assessment instruments to determine the necessity of pre-adjudicatory detention; the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2) to identify potential mental health and substance abuse needs; and the Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) to determine the risk of recidivating and to identify criminogenic factors for targeted intervention services. The YLS/CMI is also used in some jurisdictions to assist with decisions regarding diversion and level of supervision.

Structured decision-making tools provide for consistent, evidence-based, objective, and fair decisions at any of a number of critical junctures in the juvenile justice system. Their inclusion as part of the systemic implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures is essential to the long-term success of these efforts.

DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The decision to place a juvenile in a secure detention center represents one of the most important decisions of juvenile court processing and one of the most significant events in a young person's life. Detention decisions should be based on clearly defined, objective criteria that are understood and employed by all juvenile court staff. The use of a validated detention risk assessment instrument to assist in making decisions about detention can help ensure that those decisions will be structured and consistent, as well as racially and ethnically neutral. These instruments also provide a concrete, non-biased rationale that juvenile justice practitioners can share with families when engaging them in understanding decisions made about their children, as well as when eliciting their input and cooperation in response to these decisions.

In Pennsylvania, detention decisions are guided by the Juvenile Act and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) Standards Governing the Use of Secure Detention Under the Juvenile Act. The Juvenile Act, at 42 Pa.C.S. §6325 (relating to detention of children), provides that "a child taken into custody shall not be detained or placed in shelter care prior to the hearing on the petition unless his detention or care is required to protect the person or property of others or of the child or because the child may abscond or be removed from the jurisdiction of the court or because he has no parent, guardian, or custodian or other person able to provide supervision and care for him and return him to the court when required, or an order for his detention or shelter care has been made by the court pursuant to this chapter." The JCJC Standards Governing the Use of Secure Detention Under the Juvenile Act were developed on the premise that decisions regarding admissions to secure detention must be based on a commitment to utilize the most appropriate level of care consistent with the circumstances of the individual case. When the admission of a child to a secure detention facility is being considered by a judge, master, or juvenile probation officer, preference should be given to non-secure alternatives that could reduce the risk of flight or danger to the child or community.

The importance of employing a detention risk assessment instrument to assist in standardized, objective decision making at the detention stage of juvenile court processing was underscored when, in 2010, the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice endorsed the modification of the JCJC Standards Governing the Use of Secure Detention Under the Juvenile Act to incorporate the use of a detention assessment instrument based on the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) model, as supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.[4]

In 2011, the Annie E. Casey Foundation selected Pennsylvania to participate in JDAI, with four Pennsylvania counties (Allegheny, Lancaster, Lehigh, and Philadelphia) serving as pilot sites. JDAI provides training and technical assistance toward the goal of comprehensive juvenile detention reform, and consists of the following eight core strategies:

- collaboration
- collection and utilization of data
- objective admissions screening
- alternatives to detention
- case processing reforms

4 It should also be noted that, as of 2010, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency required the use of a detention risk assessment instrument as a condition of grants to support Evening Reporting Centers.

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- flexible policies for special detention cases
- attention to racial disparities
- conditions of confinement.

The application of a validated detention risk assessment instrument will greatly assist in achieving the goals of JDAI. The progress of the four pilot sites is being monitored closely to determine whether statewide implementation is warranted.

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SCREENING INSTRUMENT-VERSION 2 (MAYSI-2)

The MAYSI-2 is a scientifically proven screening instrument that is designed to help juvenile probation departments and juvenile justice service providers identify youth, ages 12–17, who may have special mental health needs. It can be used at any decision-making point within the system (i.e., detention, intake, probation, or placement). The MAYSI-2 is used in the vast majority of states at either the state or local level.

In Pennsylvania, the MAYSI-2 has been used by juvenile detention centers since 2000, and it was adopted by the Commonwealth's Youth Development Center/Youth Forest Camp (YDC/YFC) System shortly thereafter. Juvenile probation departments began implementing the MAYSI-2 in 2007, in conjunction with Pennsylvania's Models for Change initiative. Initial MAYSI-2 implementation among Pennsylvania's juvenile probation departments was supported by funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Implementation costs of the MAYSI-2 are minimal because there is no ongoing administration fee after the purchase of the software program.

The MAYSI-2 is a computerized, self-report questionnaire that contains 52 items written at a fifth grade reading level. The questions are read to youth via a computerized voice program. Youth answer in a yes/no format to questions that have been "true for them" within the "past few months." The screen requires 10–15 minutes to administer, and alerts staff to potential mental/emotional distress and behavior problems that might require immediate monitoring, additional questioning, a clinical evaluation, or another immediate response. A pencil and paper version is available in Spanish.

The MAYSI-2 is self-scoring: It generates individual scores for each youth while also compiling all scores into a separate file for aggregate data analysis. Data gathered from the MAYSI-2 support resource and policy decisions. MAYSI-2 scores can be interpreted quickly, without the expertise of a mental health professional, and are divided into the following seven subscales:

- alcohol/drug use
- angry-irritable
- depressed-anxious
- somatic complaints
- suicide ideation
- thought disturbance
- traumatic experiences.

Staff are alerted to youth with higher cut-off subscale scores via a "Caution" (i.e., the youth has scored at a level that can be said to have possible clinical significance) or "Warning" (i.e., the youth has scored exceptionally high in comparison to other youth in the juvenile justice system). There is no MAYSI-2 "total score."

As part of developing MAYSI-2 policies and procedures, juvenile probation departments were asked to establish working agreements with key departments and stakeholders regarding the use of information obtained from youth during the screening processes, orient and train staff on the use of the instrument, develop and institute response protocols, and collect and share data collected through the MAYSI-2 screening process. The MAYSI-2 is a key component of the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy, and serves as an example of how validated screening and assessment instruments can be used to guide case planning.

YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE/CASE MANAGEMENT INVENTORY (YLS/CMI)

If the juvenile justice system is to achieve a reduction in recidivism through the prevention of delinquent behavior, it must adhere to the three principles of risk, need, and responsivity. A necessary first step in this process is the introduction and use of a valid and reliable assessment instrument, such as the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), to measure both a youth's risk and needs. This information can then be used to determine appropriate levels of supervision, to establish measurable, case-specific goals, and to better allocate resources in order to achieve effective outcomes for juveniles, their families, and our communities.

The process of assessing level of risk has developed over many years. At first, professional judgment was used alone; however, the results of this approach were not all that effective. The next

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generation of assessments used actuarial tools that focused on static risk factors such as delinquent history. Third and fourth generation risk assessments are now available, which assist in identifying both static and dynamic risk factors that contribute to a youth's behavior. Applying appropriate interventions (i.e., matching services based on those risk factors) can facilitate behavioral change and potentially reduce recidivism. As assessments have improved, so have services, which have become better-informed by youth developmental theory and more directly matched to known criminogenic needs.

In June 2008, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and staff from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission embarked on a comprehensive review of various risk assessment tools designed for juvenile offenders. With the assistance of the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP) and support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, members of the Executive Committee chose to pilot the YLS/CMI risk assessment instrument. Since then, the majority of Pennsylvania's juvenile probation departments have incorporated the YLS/CMI into their daily practices, with the goal of statewide utilization. Support for the project continues through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), with ongoing assistance from NYSAP.

The YLS/CMI is based on the Level of Service Inventory (LSI), developed by Don Andrews in 1982 for use with adult offenders in parole release and supervision. A version of the LSI was subsequently devised for use with adolescents and was called the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI; Andrews, Robinson, & Hoge, 1984).

The YLS/CMI is a valid and reliable risk instrument that assesses risk for recidivism by measuring 42 risk/need factors over the following eight domains:

- prior and current offenses
- family circumstances/parenting
- education/employment
- peer relations
- substance abuse
- leisure/recreation
- personality/behavior
- attitudes/orientation.

Any of the domains may also be identified as an area of strength. Ultimately, a youth is assigned an overall risk level of Low, Moderate, High, or Very High, based on the aforementioned domains and other factors gathered through a structured interview/information-gathering process. Under certain circumstances dictated by policy, a professional may increase or decrease the assigned risk level (i.e., "override" the assessment results). The assessed risk level is to be used to inform the juvenile justice professional of the level of supervision and intervention targets.

Efforts to implement the YLS/CMI throughout Pennsylvania have proven successful, but not without a constant level of education and training of staff and others. Buy-in of stakeholders, leadership, the development of supervision and case management policies and procedures, proper administration of the tool, and the sharing of implementation strategies have all been critical to successful implementation. The opportunity to gather important data and to evaluate outcomes will prove very valuable to the system as we move forward.

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

A challenge to departments using screening and assessment instruments is to ensure not only appropriate and effective staff training in their initial use, but also ongoing fidelity to their intended application. Attention to the specified information-gathering and application protocols, scoring procedures, and interpretation guidelines is critical to the quality assurance process.

Assessment instruments are often chosen, at least in part, based on the extent to which they have been deemed reliable in accurately measuring what it is that they are intended to measure when used by a variety of individuals (i.e., the consistency with which the same information is rated by different scorers). This concept is known as inter-rater reliability (IRR). The intent is to ensure that different staff (raters) will consistently score the same case in the same manner. Inter-rater reliability tends to be highest immediately following training on the use of a particular instrument. It is at this point that the scoring protocols and instructions are most clearly understood and evenly applied by staff. Rater drift occurs on an individual basis when, over time, these protocols and clarity of instructions blur and are replaced with alternative actions that contradict the tool design.

In order to ensure the highest levels of inter-rater reliability possible, appropriate quality assurance activities must be incorporated into local practices and procedures. These can occur

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through a variety of means and over varying periods of time. Most involve supervisory oversight. For example, supervisors can occasionally independently rate cases and compare their findings with those of their staff. Differences in the rating process can then be identified and clarified with the staff. Booster trainings, where instrument application is reviewed on a structured basis and staff rate the same case followed by discussion and consensus building by all, are essential to the ongoing quality assurance process. Other quality assurance activities may involve observation of staff's use of assessment instruments with clients, case auditing by supervisors to ensure appropriate processing of information, and the use of staff-specific and aggregate data collection around the key outcomes derived from the instruments.

Attention to the concept of inter-rater reliability is critical to maintaining the highest level of rater performance, which will in turn improve the predictive validity of a tool within a department.

CASE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Case plans, which are sometimes referred to as supervision plans, are written documents that, at a minimum, outline the activities to be completed during a period of supervision (Carey, 2010; Clear, 1981). More profoundly, case plans link assessments with services aimed to improve competencies and reduce recidivism. They are roadmaps that provide direction for probation officers, youths, and families throughout the period of supervision. As such, they are a very valuable element of Pennsylvania's JJSES and the centerpiece of supervision for clients.

Comprehensive case plans

- focus on reducing risk factors that, according to assessments, have the greatest impact on recidivism
- emphasize strengths
- identify triggers
- customize approaches based on traits such as culture, gender, language, disabilities, and mental health.

In essence, their goal is to identify and prioritize the domains that will have the greatest impact on future delinquent behavior, appropriately match services to those areas, and do so in the right dosage and intensity.

Case plans have a number of critical functions, including

- helping to monitor the terms and conditions of supervision and increase the rate of completion of these conditions
- encouraging long-term behavioral change, with a goal of reduced recidivism
- addressing triggers or barriers that place clients at further risk for recidivism
- helping youth set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART)
- focusing priorities for youth
- identifying youth's responsibilities and helping them take ownership of expectations
- holding youth accountable for their actions
- helping youth monitor their progress.

> "Recidivism can be reduced by 30 percent if the right treatment is provided to the right juvenile at the right time and in the right way. Effective case planning is the key toward achieving this goal."
>
> Mark Carey

Effective case plans are developed by probation officers in conjunction with youth and their families. Working together to develop case plans helps establish rapport with clients, clarifies expectations, enhances clients' perceptions of fairness, and increases the likelihood of understanding and buy-in around the activities required of youth during supervision. In addition, effective case plans are dynamic in nature; they are expected to change over time.

Case Plans and the YLS/CMI

When a decision was reached to use the YLS/CMI as the risk/needs assessment instrument in Pennsylvania, a determination was made that the case plan section of the YLS/CMI did not appropriately meet the needs of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, which is based on the principles of balanced and restorative justice. In order to stay true to these principles, it was recognized that there was the need to develop a standardized case plan format and structure to address the key elements of balanced and restorative justice, as well as the risk and needs identified by the YLS/CMI.

A standardized, goal-focused, and strength-based case plan is currently under development. The case plan will become fully

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integrated into the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS), which currently includes the YLS/CMI assessment, YLS/CMI data reports, and other related data elements. As a result, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system will be able to gather valuable data and track outcomes pertaining to both the YLS/CMI and case plans. An additional benefit of developing a standardized case plan is the opportunity to train juvenile probation staff throughout Pennsylvania on the elements of an effective case plan—one that is far more comprehensive and meaningful than simply a review of the conditions of supervision and one that contains key elements of balanced and restorative justice.

While the time, effort, and resources required to implement a risk/needs assessment and case plan, and to incorporate them into the daily operations of an evidence-based juvenile probation department, have been significant, the wealth of data and anticipated improvement of outcomes make this venture all the more meaningful.

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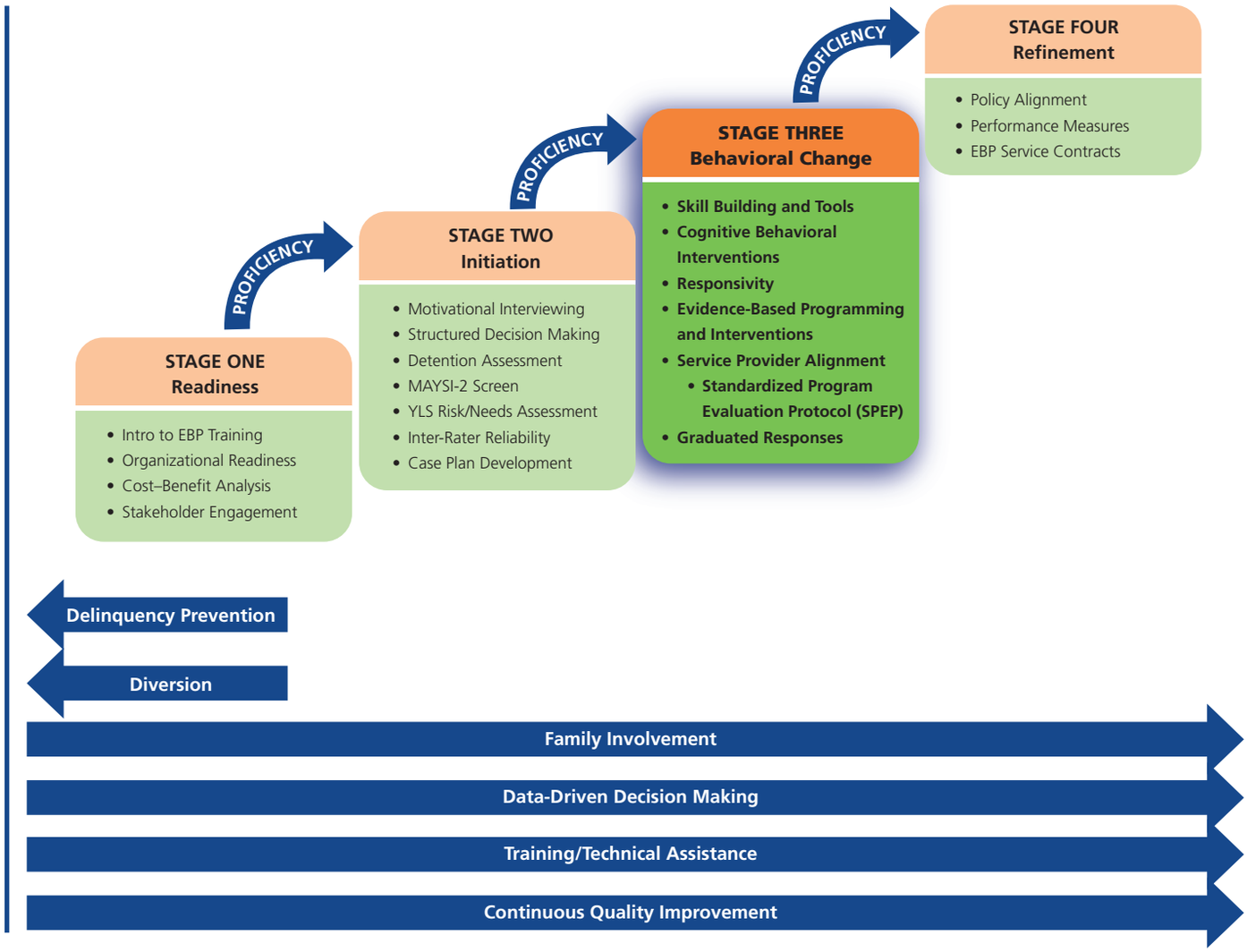
STAGE THREE: BEHAVIORAL CHANGE



"I saw the angel in the marble and I chiseled until I set it free."

Michelangelo

Developing effective case plans, such as those described in Stage Two, requires an understanding of long-term behavioral change strategies that are grounded in evidence-based practices, the ability to match these strategies with individuals' responsivity factors, and the acquisition of competencies and tools necessary to ensure that one-on-one sessions with juveniles help them build skills that address their criminogenic needs. Once the screening and assessment components of Stage Two are in place, these behavioral change initiatives can begin. Stage Three, then, logically builds from the information amassed from the diagnostic practices established in Stage Two and includes such tasks as putting in place cognitive behavioral programs, applying responsivity information to referral decisions, ensuring that programs are evidence-based, and giving case management staff the competencies and tools necessary to ensure that their one-on-one sessions build skills that address criminogenic needs. These tasks are not easy. Probation staff need to be trained on behavioral intervention techniques; use tools to assist in skill

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practice; use violation response guidelines consistent with research that supports swift, certain, and proportionate responses; and have access to coaching services. From the inception of a case plan, they must establish a partnership with the family of a youth under their supervision—one that is not a suspension of or substitution for parental obligations. Family involvement is especially critical during times of transition, such as when the youth returns home from placement or completes his/her probation and leaves court supervision.

Probation staff also need to be knowledgeable about local community-based services in order to make proper referrals. Service providers need to be confident about implementing the most effective programs, targeting the proper behavioral skills, and guarding against quality service delivery slippage.

A partnership between probation departments and service providers that ensures that evidence-based interventions are used effectively is critical to achieving long-term risk reduction outcomes. The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) described in Stage Three provides guidance in aligning service needs with quality local programming.

Stage Three includes numerous and potentially complex processes. As a result, it is expected that it will take longer for juvenile justice professionals to gain proficiency with this stage.

SKILL BUILDING AND TOOLS

Insight alone into why change is in our best interest is not enough to modify behavior. If that were the case, most people would not have difficulty losing weight or quitting smoking. Instead, the most effective interventions leading to prosocial changes are behavioral.

Social learning theory provides juvenile justice professionals with a set of foundational, behavior-oriented principles that promote long-lasting behavioral change. It asserts that people learn and adopt new behaviors through such means as positive and negative reinforcement and skill practice. Skill practice involves observing others, practicing new behaviors, receiving feedback on the practiced behaviors, and applying the behaviors in real-life situations. As we practice new ways of responding to situations, we also integrate new ways of thinking about, or processing, those events. As Drs. Andrews and Bonta (1998) note, "There are virtually no serious competitors for the following when it comes to changing criminal behavior":

- **modeling:** demonstrating those behaviors we want to see in others
- **reinforcement:** rewarding those behaviors we want to see repeated
- **role-playing:** creating opportunities for practice and providing corrective feedback
- **graduated practice:** unbundling complex behaviors into their smaller components and practicing these smaller steps individually, building toward the complex behavior
- **extinction:** ensuring that prosocial styles of thinking, feeling, and acting are not inadvertently punished, and that antisocial styles are not inadvertently rewarded.

Many youth involved in the juvenile justice system, particularly those at a high risk to reoffend, are lacking in prosocial skills such as conflict resolution, anger management, problem solving, and emotional regulation. Attending a class and listening to a counselor talk about anger management, for example, is unlikely to help an offender build new skills in managing responses to difficult situations any more than listening to music will help a person become a musician. But listening to a counselor describe anger management techniques, observing these techniques in others, and practicing and perfecting them over time will help offenders develop more productive responses to volatile situations.

One of the conditions that separates professionals from amateurs is that they spend hundreds—if not thousands—of hours over many years practicing their skills. Research has shown similar findings for high-risk youth: The amount of programming and skill practice (i.e., the dosage) required for change to be sustained over the long term increases as the risk level of the individual increases (Bourgon & Armstrong, 2005). Community service practices should align with these dosage thresholds. In addition, research has demonstrated that juvenile justice professionals can have a profound impact on recidivism based on their one-on-one contact with probationers. This will occur if and only if juvenile justice professionals apply effective skill practice techniques related to the deficits associated with youths' criminogenic needs.

Probation's role is changing within a risk reduction model from that of a broker and case manager to that of a teacher. In order for juvenile justice professionals to be successful in this role, they must have the necessary skills, comfort, and tools. JJSES provides

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a number of resources to assist in these areas, including training on skill practice, specific tools (e.g., journals and worksheets) that juvenile justice professionals can use to structure their one-on-one and family sessions and teach prosocial skills, access to cognitive behavioral interventions, and a set of guidelines that align criminogenic needs with the most common skill deficits.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

Juveniles under supervision come with a myriad of challenges, but none are as prevalent or present as great a risk for getting them in trouble than cognitions that lead to negative behavior. These "thinking errors" include, among others, the tendency to rationalize and justify antisocial or delinquent behavior, difficulty interpreting social cues, underdeveloped moral reasoning, a sense of entitlement, a failure to assess consequences of actions, a lack of empathy for others, and poor problem-solving and decision-making skills. Such skill deficits can lead to rigid responses to stressful situations, impulsivity, and emotional or violent reactions to perceived disrespect or danger. They tend to engender strong emotions in adolescents that, in turn, reduce their ability to address problems in a calm and reasoned fashion.

Cognitive behavioral interventions, delivered primarily in group settings, are designed to restructure problematic thinking patterns and attitudes. These interventions teach youth to monitor their patterns of automatic thoughts in situations that would otherwise lead to antisocial behavior. The interventions also focus on developing prosocial skills such as managing anger, assuming personal responsibility for one's actions, seeing other people's perspectives, and setting realistic goals. Whatever their focus, all cognitive behavioral groups involve role modeling of new attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills by the facilitator; repeated practice by the juvenile of what is being taught and learned; the extension of that practice to the world of school, family, and friends; and learning strategies to deal with potential relapse.

Research has shown that cognitive behavioral interventions have the most significant impact on delinquent behavior and recidivism among juveniles. On average, cognitive groups—whether conducted in the community or in residential facilities—reduce rearrest or reconviction by 20–30 percent. There is little difference in such effect sizes among the major programs in use, such as Reasoning and Rehabilitation, Aggression Replacement Training, and Thinking for a Change. The key is to ensure, in each instance, that the curriculum is delivered as it was designed for the proper duration, in the proper intensity, and to the most appropriate youth. It is this failure in implementation quality—the fact that programs are often delivered without fidelity to the proven model and curriculum—or the fact that quality and fidelity vary from one professional to the next that generally explains why demonstration projects usually produce better results than those implemented in the real world; it is not that line supervisors and officers cannot facilitate effective cognitive behavioral groups.

Among other reasons why cognitive behavioral programs often do not fulfill their promise of behavioral change among juveniles under supervision or in residential facilities is that the goals of cognitive behavioral groups often do not align with the goals of case management. Often, probation officers do not understand what is occurring or being learned in a cognitive behavioral program. Unless they are conversant with the content of the program and are provided with the tools to work with juveniles in order to apply these new approaches to old problems on a daily basis, they may become more of a hindrance than an aid in addressing the criminogenic thinking so prevalent among youth under supervision.[5] In yet other circumstances, service providers are either not clear on what behavioral targets are expected by referring juvenile justice professionals or they fail to adjust their programs to meet those targets. Cognitive behavioral interventions will most likely achieve their intended objective when the juvenile justice professional and service provider work collaboratively through effective communication and behavioral change reinforcement both within and outside the group setting.

In short, cognitive behavioral interventions, whether delivered in the community or in residential facilities, are extremely effective in addressing the antisocial thinking that so often leads to delinquent behavior, but these interventions can only achieve their intended purpose under three sets of circumstances. First, the interventions must be delivered as they were designed and intended, with integrity and fidelity to the structured curriculum. Second, the attitudes and skills that youth learn in groups must be reinforced through their interactions with their juvenile justice professionals, and the attitudes and skills that youth learn with their juvenile justice professionals must be reinforced through their interactions with service providers. Third, juvenile justice professionals, service providers, and families must work collaboratively and communicate effectively in order for behavioral change to occur.

5 For an example of a "tool" that helps juvenile justice professionals understand the skills being learned in the cognitive behavioral program Thinking for a Change and that provides helpful tips on how to support youth in practicing the skills being learned each week, see *A Guide to Thinking for a Change for Non-Group Facilitators: Case Worker Reinforcement of T4C* by The Carey Group, Inc.

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RESPONSIVITY

Of the three fundamental principles of evidence-based practices—risk, need, and responsivity—responsivity is the least understood and least applied by practitioners, despite the fact that it is a crucial contributor to a juvenile's motivation to change and a crucial factor for mediating the success of treatment. Unless responsivity is given ample attention when developing case plans and determining programming, the effectiveness of an individual's supervision will be diminished and behavioral change will be less likely to occur.

There are three primary reasons why practitioners treat responsivity as the "odd factor out" when implementing EBP. First, many practioners express concern about how to properly address responsivity. Second, even if they do understand, there are very few standardized assessment instruments to measure its various elements. Finally, juvenile justice professionals may not have a sufficient continuum of services to select from in order to address these issues.

Responsivity consists of three basic components:

- aligning supervision and treatment approaches with individuals' learning preferences and abilities
- matching the characteristics of individuals with those of their probation officers or service providers
- matching the skills of probation officers or service providers with the types of programs or interventions being offered.

Some of the most important attributes that affect a juvenile's responsivity and readiness to learn are motivational levels, personality characteristics, cognitive and intellectual deficits, mental health conditions, gender, demographic and cultural variables, and personal maturity. So, for example, research shows that cognitive behavioral programs prove more effective with youth of average to above-average intelligence and less effective with those exhibiting below-average intelligence. In addition, gender-specific treatment groups tend to be more successful than mixed gender groups. Most females have been victimized in the past, are in need of a gender-specific curriculum, and require an emotionally safe environment—all of which support a gender-specific approach.

Given the fact that some higher-risk juveniles are relatively unconcerned about the consequences of their actions (except possibly in a narrow legal sense) and that they feel coerced into supervision, engaging and motivating them in the treatment process becomes a primary factor of success. Effective juvenile probation officers and service providers are adept at addressing those responsivity factors of youth that might prevent learning, and they possess the attitudes and skills needed to form a professional alliance with youth and their families and to motivate positive change. It is here that tools such as motivational interviewing, cost–benefit exercises, role modeling, reinforcement, and sanctioning come into play. Their competent use can enhance the interaction between professionals and juveniles. On the other hand, where juvenile probation's and service providers' attitudes and competencies do not match the motivational and learning requirements of youth and their families, failure becomes a real possibility.

While practitioners in the field of juvenile justice are becoming more adept at assessing risk, identifying criminogenic needs, and incorporating the results into supervision processes and case plans, they remain adrift in terms of dealing with factors of juvenile responsivity. The consequences of such negligence can be substantial. In the words of one prominent researcher in the field, "failure to appropriately assess and consider responsivity factors may not only undermine treatment gains and waste treatment resources, but may also decrease public safety" (Kennedy, 2007).

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING AND INTERVENTIONS

The Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy's evidence-based programming and interventions component is built on three initiatives that are focused on risk reduction services and practices. These initiatives, all created with funding by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), include Communities That Care (CTC), Blueprints for Violence Prevention, and the Resource Center for Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs and Practices.

Communities That Care

Communities That Care, which began in 1994, is an evidence-based, risk-focused prevention strategy that helps communities decrease risk factors and increase protective factors through a community assessment and collaborative planning process. Rather than assessing risk at the individual level, CTC assesses risk at the community level, and uses evidence-based programs to address the most prevalent risk factors, thus reducing the overall level of delinquency within the community. In this way, young people are given the opportunity to grow and develop in a healthy environment, and the number of youth entering the

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juvenile justice system is reduced. The CTC process also provides communities with the foundation and technical assistance to prepare for, and implement, other evidence-based programming, and has been shown to increase implementation quality, fidelity, and sustainability of programs.

Blueprints for Violence Prevention

Blueprints for Violence Prevention is the result of an initiative that was designed and launched, in 1996, by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder, with funding support from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and PCCD. The initiative's goal is to identify programs proven to prevent adolescent problem behavior. Blueprints has identified eleven model prevention and intervention programs. These programs are not only effective in preventing or reducing certain problem behaviors in adolescents, but they are also extremely cost effective. In addition to the Blueprints programs, a number of other interventions have been demonstrated by research to be effective. With the support of PCCD's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee (JJDPC), and in coordination with PCCD's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, over 160 research-based programs have since been implemented in Pennsylvania utilizing federal and state funds.

The Resource Center for Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs and Practices

The Resource Center for Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs and Practices was created in 2008 by PCCD to support the proliferation and sustainability of high-quality and effective juvenile justice intervention and delinquency prevention programs in Pennsylvania. The Center has three main focuses:

- supporting the quality implementation of established evidence-based program models
- incorporating research-based principles and practices into existing local juvenile justice programs
- supporting community planning and implementation of evidence-based prevention program models in Pennsylvania.

Funding for the Resource Center is jointly provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children, Youth and Families and PCCD. The Resource Center Steering Committee includes representatives from the Department of Public Welfare, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, the Departments of Education and Health, and other stakeholders. Support is provided for the following evidence-based programs:

- The Incredible Years
- Multisystemic Therapy
- Functional Family Therapy
- Strengthening Families Program 10–14
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- Project Towards No Drug Abuse
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Life Skills Training Program
- Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care
- Aggression Replacement Training.

One of the successful outcomes of the Resource Center's work was the coordinated effort among system partners and providers to provide data on the functioning and impact of three evidence-based intervention programs: Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, Multisystemic Therapy, and Functional Family Therapy. The Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support Center was tasked with collecting quarterly performance data from all three of these programs. The following are some of the findings from the 2010 Outcomes Summary:

- **Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care:** 68 percent of youth were successfully discharged and 97 percent of that group had no new delinquency/criminal charges during treatment.
- **Multisystemic Therapy:** 80 percent of youth were successfully discharged, with over 80 percent of that group having no new delinquency/criminal charges during treatment. In addition, 70 percent of families reported improved family functioning, as defined as better parenting skills.
- **Functional Family Therapy:** 72 percent of youth were successfully discharged, with 95 percent of that group having no new delinquency/criminal charges during treatment. In addition, 98 percent of parents showed improved parenting skills.
- **Out-of-home placement rates:** Counties not using these programs showed a 3.35 percent increase in out-of-home placement rates from 2006 to 2010. Counties using at least one of these three interventions showed a 2.92 percent decrease in out-of-home placement rates for the same years.

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The Resource Center continues to evolve to support JJSES. Beginning in July 2012, the Center will expand its capacity to provide training and technical assistance to support the implementation of evidence-based practices. This includes supporting the implementation of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) to evaluate both "homegrown" and brand-name programs against evidence-based best practice standards and to provide training and technical assistance to probation departments and service providers.

THE STANDARDIZED PROGRAM EVALUATION PROTOCOL (SPEP)

Dr. Mark Lipsey et al. conducted a groundbreaking meta-analysis of the characteristics of effective delinquency interventions, with the goal of providing a solid foundation for improving delinquency programs and services. Based on his analysis of approximately 700 controlled studies of interventions with juvenile offenders, Lipsey developed the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP). The SPEP is a validated, data-driven rating system for determining how well a program matches what research tells us is effective for that particular type of program in reducing the recidivism of juvenile offenders. More specifically, the SPEP creates a metric by assigning points to programs according to how closely their characteristics match those associated with similar programs shown, in research studies, to have the best recidivism outcomes.

The body of research on programs for juvenile offenders indicates that several general characteristics are most strongly related to their effects on juvenile delinquency:

- the type of program
- the service quantity or dosage
- the risk levels of the youth served by the program
- the quality with which the program is implemented.

Lipsey's work provides specific research-based profiles of program characteristics that can be used both as "best practice" standards against which to evaluate juvenile justice programs and as roadmaps for improving the programs. The more closely programs resemble those that research has shown to be effective, the more points they receive. Higher program scores have equated to greater recidivism reductions in two statewide evaluations conducted in North Carolina and Arizona. While recidivism is the primary outcome measured, other important intermediate outcomes and individual indicators, such as school enrollment and substance use, can also be tracked with individualized treatment plans and updated assessments of progress (Lipsey, Howell, Kelly, Chapman, & Carver, 2010).

While the initial SPEP score is certainly of interest, it more importantly establishes a baseline for program improvement. The difference between the scores for the individual components of the SPEP and the maximum possible point values for each provide information about where program ratings can improve. The resulting program improvement process must be a collaborative effort between probation departments and service providers.

SERVICE PROVIDER ALIGNMENT

Working with higher-risk juveniles to change behavior and reduce recidivism is a difficult and arduous task. Youth placed on probation possess a multitude of issues and criminogenic needs. Dealing with these challenges often requires expertise and knowledge outside those of any single probation officer. In most instances, other professionals from a variety of disciplines, such as mental health, child welfare, health, family counseling, and substance abuse, must become involved for assessment, case planning, and treatment services.

As a result, nowhere is collaboration in juvenile justice more important than in the interactions of probation officers and service providers. While collaboration for the benefit of youth and the community sounds easy, it is often difficult to implement. Some of the barriers to collaboration include

- a failure of service providers or probation officers to understand the goals and practices of their colleagues in other professions
- the application of often incompatible treatment and intervention models
- conflict between service provider treatment goals and the legal demands placed on juveniles by the court
- time and work pressures that preclude ongoing and effective communication among the parties working with juveniles and their families.

In order to implement evidence-based practices and the JJSES Framework, these impediments to collaboration have to be overcome. Several steps can be taken to ensure that all parties dealing with juveniles under supervision are working toward the same goals:

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- All probation officers and service providers working with juveniles should be trained in evidence-based practices and the JJSES model.
- Memoranda of understanding and/or working protocols should be established among relevant public and private agencies, detailing information to be exchanged concerning juveniles' cases and outlining appropriate forms of communication.
- Multidisciplinary teams of professionals providing assistance or treatment to medium and high-risk juveniles should be established.
- These teams should develop unified case plans with juveniles and their families to minimize the possibility of conflicting goals and expectations that would hinder efforts to address criminogenic and other needs.

The goal of evidence-based supervision for juveniles should be to make compliance with the orders of court and the requirements of effective behavioral change as seamless as possible. Such a goal can only be achieved if all parties assisting and supervising juveniles have the same outcomes in mind and are constantly coordinating their actions. Without such alignment of purpose and practice on the part of probation and service providers, youth may very well become confused, frustrated, and resistant to learning new cognitive and social skills that will enable them to move toward law-abiding and productive adult lives.

GRADUATED RESPONSES: SANCTIONS AND REWARDS

Human behavior is largely shaped through social interactions, including the application of rewards and sanctions. At a very young age, children learn that certain behaviors elicit a response that is gratifying, neutral, or unpleasant. Parents who give their children treats when they complete chores are more likely to see a repeat of that positive behavior in the future. Parents who give their children treats when they have temper tantrums in grocery stores are more likely to see that outburst behavior repeated. Children who burn their hands on the stove are less likely to repeat the act that led to the pain. For juvenile justice practitioners working with youth, behavioral change is promoted when they use both sanctions for antisocial behavior and incentives and positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior. To maximize results, both sanctions and rewards should be guided by policy that is informed by research.

Sanctions

To be effective, sanctions should be

- **certain:** Every antisocial act should receive a disapproving message (Grasmick & Bryjak, 1980; Nichols & Ross, 1990; Paternoster, 1989).
- **swift:** Sanctions should be administered as soon as possible after the act (Rhine, 1993).
- **proportionate:** Research indicates that sanctions do not need to be severe to be effective. In fact, overly harsh responses can be counterproductive to behavioral change. Higher-risk offenders tend to have long histories of punishment and disapproval, and many have learned to adapt to and dismiss the pain that accompanies them.

In addition, in order for a sanctioning policy to be effective, certain features need to be present. For example, youth must know what behaviors are desired or not desired (Tyler, 1990), the consequences of behaviors should be clearly understood, and sanctions should be administered equitably (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997). A structured response to sanctioning will promote consistency among staff and help achieve these sanctioning conditions.

Higher-risk juveniles tend to have long histories of punishment and disapproval, and many have learned to adapt to and dismiss the pain that accompanies them.

Rewards

Youthful offenders are more likely to repeat and adopt prosocial behaviors when those behaviors and attitudes are recognized, acknowledged, and affirmed. Juvenile justice professionals tend to use sanctions as the primary method to respond to or control offenders' behavior. However, research evidence supports the use of more rewards and incentives than sanctions (a ratio of 4:1 to 6:1) to improve offender motivation to change (Gendreau, 1996; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Wodahl, Garland, Culhane, & McCarty, 2011). Rewards do not have to be costly or difficult to administer. A word of praise or encouragement can provoke a sense of pride and goodwill. Other examples of rewards include notes of appreciation (e.g., letters of acknowledgment or certificates), acknowledgment of accomplishment in front of others (e.g., praise in public, acknowledgment by a person in a position of authority),

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bus vouchers, reduced drug testing, or early discharge from supervision (Carey, 2010).

Research evidence supports the use of more rewards and incentives than sanctions (a ratio of four to six rewards for each message of disapproval) to improve juveniles' motivation to change.

JJSES supports the development of policy based on research evidence that promotes the use of clear, graduated sanctions and rewards in response to youth behavior. To assist in this effort, JJSES will provide both training on the effective use of sanctions and rewards and examples of structured decision-making models from other states.

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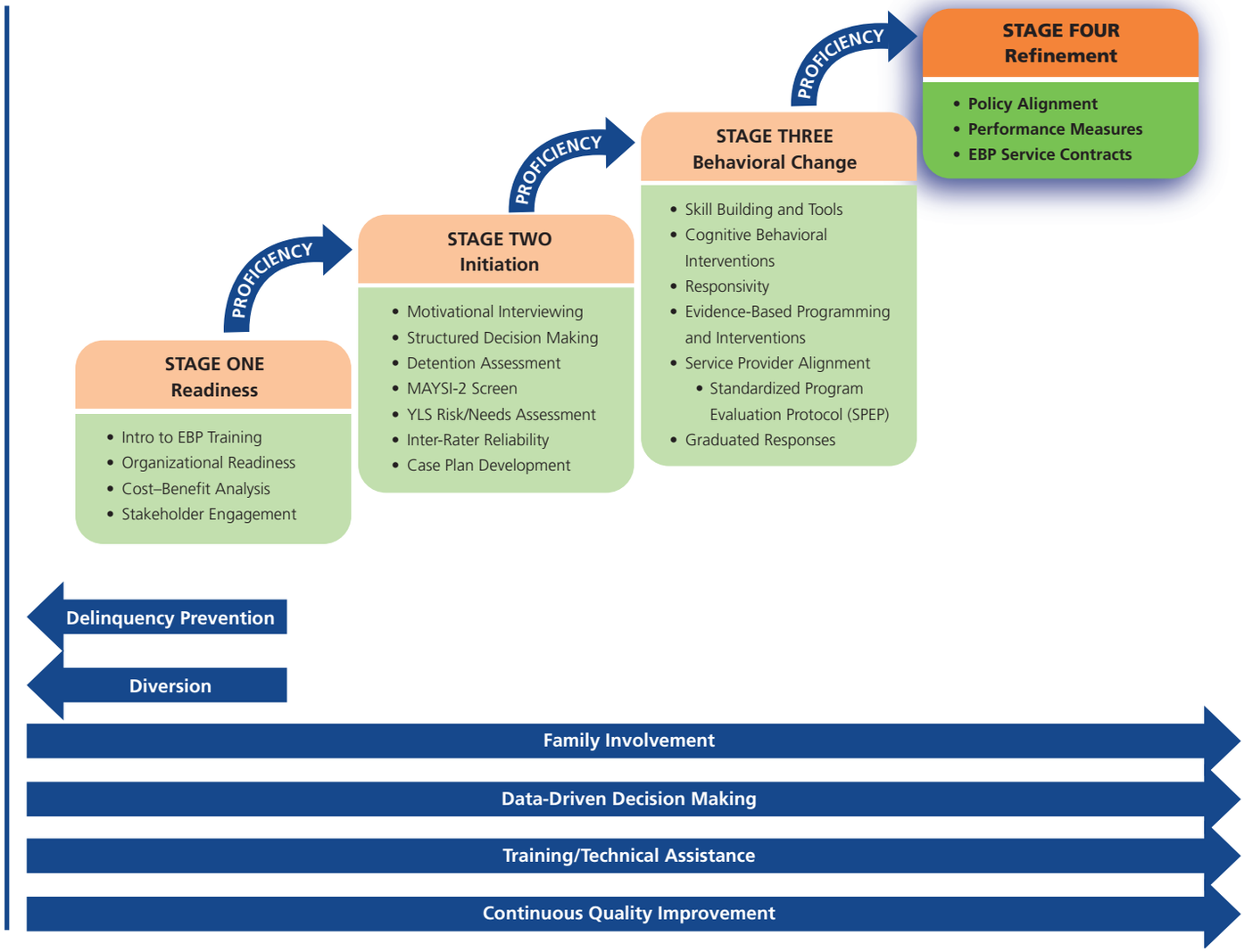
STAGE FOUR: REFINEMENT



"Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right."

Rudyard Kipling

The final stage, Refinement, involves ongoing feedback for the purpose of making incremental improvements. Implementation is rarely done perfectly the first time. Therefore, a system for measurement and feedback must be put in place to ensure that the processes are, in fact, having their intended effect. When they are not, changes are required. Stage Four, therefore, includes the collection of data and outcome measures. Information-gathering processes take place at earlier stages as well; however, it is at Stage Four, after all other tasks have been put in place, that they will have maximum effect.

Stage Four also involves modifying policies to ingrain what were once new or piloted practices. Similarly, service referral guidelines and community-based service contracts should be modified to reflect the changes in practice that resulted from earlier partnership activities.

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POLICY ALIGNMENT

Committing to evidence-based practices also means committing to evidence-based policy. Practice flows from policy, and uninformed policy can easily result in ineffective or even harmful consequences. This is especially true when it comes to implementing EBP in juvenile justice at the state and local levels.

While EBP demands a rational decision-making approach to creating policy, it is more likely that juvenile justice professionals and the appointed and elected officials who oversee them engage in what some researchers call "muddling through" (Bulmer, 1986). These researchers argue that many, if not most, policy decisions are not made in light of predetermined goals based on a careful analysis of the situation and relevant research, but are piecemeal endeavors that address problems a bit at a time.

Elected officials often make decisions in response to high-profile events. These decisions can lead to legislation that effectively precludes the application of research in terms of the disposition, detention, and supervision of juveniles in the community. As a result, juveniles better served in the community may be unnecessarily detained or committed to a residential facility, conditions of probation may be included in court orders that preclude officers from focusing on the criminogenic needs of youth, and there may be a willingness to transfer juveniles to adult court as a means of appearing "tough on crime." In addition, uninformed decisions made in response to high-profile delinquent acts can cost taxpayers vast amounts of money with little enhancement to public safety.

In the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, there is a growing consensus among researchers and practitioners about "what works" in terms of effectively responding to juvenile delinquency. While this body of knowledge must always be tested and retested, revised and expanded, and even questioned and rejected, there is little doubt that it forms a much sounder basis for juvenile justice policy and practice than ideology, politics, and personal preferences. In the same vein, research must be at the core of the formal and informal policies of the legal and institutional structures within which trained professionals seek to supervise and hold accountable juveniles who have offended. Without a research-based alignment of policy and practice, efforts to realize the public safety benefits promised through the application of evidence-based practices can quickly become an effort in futility.

Policy alignment must occur on several levels:

- **Within individual juvenile probation departments:** In order for juvenile supervision and family intervention to be effective, all organizational units and levels of staff within a department—from the chief to support personnel—must understand and agree with the department's policy goals developed through the use of research. They must be willing to accept evidence-based principles that dictate that professionals have a moral obligation to do good and avoid harm when it comes to preventing and alleviating juvenile delinquency.
- **Within the immediate environment of the juvenile probation department:** Juvenile probation departments work with a network of public and private service providers. Each of these providers must be educated in research-based practices with respect to changing delinquent juvenile behavior and be willing to revise their policies to enhance the capacity of everyone, working in collaboration, to achieve this important public safety goal.
- **Within the local juvenile justice system:** All juvenile justice practitioners, such as judges, prosecutors, the defense bar, victims' advocates, and elected officials, must be provided the opportunity to learn about EBP and the research-driven policies that must be in place for it to succeed. Often known as Smarter Sentencing in the criminal justice system, this body of knowledge brings to the fore the evidence surrounding the effective use of criminal justice sanctions, such as punishment, incapacitation, deterrence, treatment, and restoration, and how the use or misuse of these sanctions can enable or prevent the application of EBP.
- **Within the local and statewide political environment:** Local and state elected legislators are the ultimate legal decision makers in their jurisdictions. While they must take many variables into consideration when proposing legislation, all too often the emotional impact of spectacular delinquent acts, driven by media hysteria, seems to be the deciding factor in establishing juvenile justice legislation. Through education and other methods, legislators need to be exposed to what research says about effectively preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Juvenile justice system leaders interested in determining the impact of their policies and practices on outcomes and in identifying areas to improve need to put in place ways to measure

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the performance of their departments or juvenile justice systems. These measures help leaders determine whether their departments or systems are achieving their intended goals and outcomes. They quantify the effects of business processes, products, and services and allow for policy discussions and decisions to be "data-driven." Performance measures for juvenile justice could consist of indicators for effectiveness, efficiency, satisfaction, or timeliness. Given the JJSES emphasis on risk reduction, the discussion in this Monograph will focus on efforts designed to reduce rearrests.

Common Quotes in Support of Performance Measures

"What gets measured, gets done."

"Performance measurement helps us move from accidental involvement to purposeful planning."

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

Performance measurement should not be confused with program evaluation. While the former provides data on the integrity of processes, inputs, and outputs, it does not seek to determine causality. Program evaluation involves the use of specific research methodologies to answer select questions about the impact of an intervention. It establishes a correlation between activities and observed changes while taking into account other factors that may have contributed to or influenced the changes.

Performance measurement and its various elements may be defined as follows:

- **Performance measurement:** The systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative information that helps a department determine if it is reaching its goals. It measures the success of the summation of activities designed to achieve department-wide objectives.

  Examples: Was the youth's involvement in the probation system correlated to lower rearrest rates? Did the employment program facilitate the youth's acquisition of a job?

  Performance measures quantify long-term outcomes as well as intermediate and process measures.

- **Intermediate measures:** A measure of results that indicates progress toward the desired end results rather than achievement of the final outcome.

  Example: Did participation in the cognitive behavioral program increase the youth's self-reported conformity to prosocial attitudes and values?

- **Process measures:** Measurement of the performance of a process, providing real-time feedback that can be acted on quickly.

  Example: Is the new policy requiring medium and high-risk offenders to participate in cognitive behavioral programming resulting in increased referrals to the program?

- **Dashboard measures:** The identification of a few performance measures that are considered the most meaningful indicators of progress toward goals. A department cannot focus on everything at once. So, just as a driver looks at a limited number of gauges on the dashboard when driving, a department focuses on certain measures and uses them as indicators of progress or warning signals that further investigation is required.

Sample Dashboard Measures

Percent of the population with completed risk/needs assessment within the time frame identified by policy:
Short-term target 75 percent; long-term target 95 percent

Average gain score (i.e., improved increases in protective measure score as identified through re-assessment):
Short-term target 3 points; long-term target 5 points

Percent of medium to high-risk juveniles who have case plans developed within the time frame identified by policy:
Short-term target 75 percent; long-term target 95 percent

Percent of high-risk juveniles referred to treatment:
Short-term target 75 percent; long-term target 95 percent

Percent of medium and high-risk juveniles with technical violations resulting in revocation:
Short-term target 25 percent; long-term target 15 percent

Percent of high-risk juveniles who attend treatment:
Short-term target 75 percent; long-term target 85 percent

Percent of cases discharged in which the top three criminogenic needs were met:
Short-term target 60 percent; long-term target 85 percent

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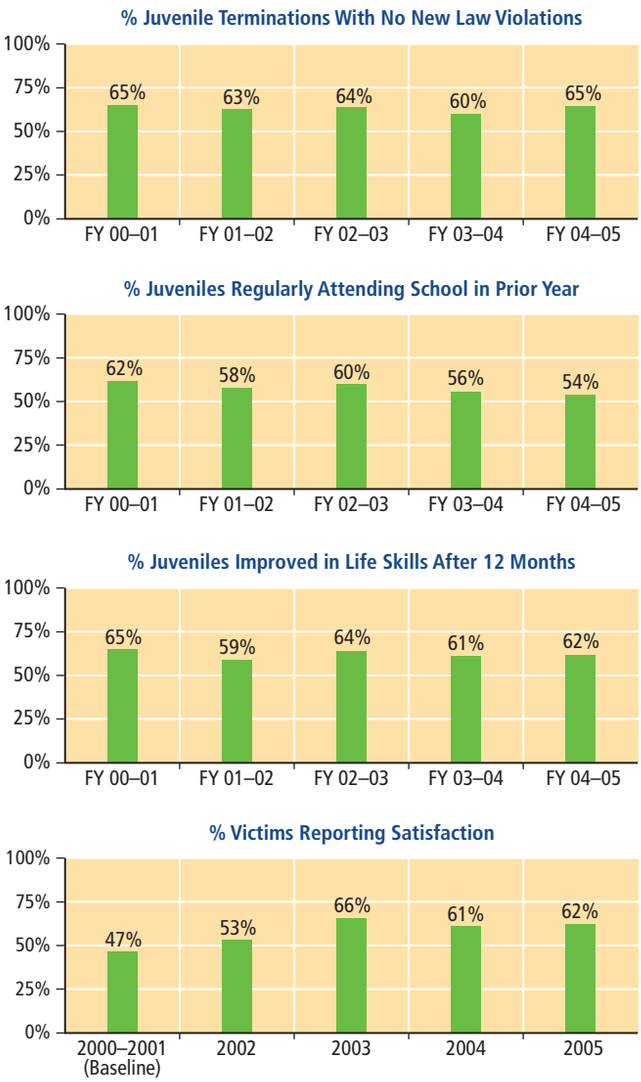
EXAMPLES OF EASY-TO-READ DASHBOARD MEASURES: ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



JJSES endorses the establishment and tracking of performance indicators and its subcomponents (intermediate, process, and dashboard measures). As such, departments should ensure that the measures are

- based on a logic model indicating which activities and inputs are tied to expected outcomes
- clear and simple to understand
- accessible to all individuals who contribute to the performance outcome.

Each JJSES stage will contain a series of performance measures that a department should collect. While the actual performance measures are still being developed, the dashboard measures listed on page 33 and to the left are examples related to risk reduction and balanced and restorative justice goals.[6]

Each department is encouraged to complete a logic model and, from that process, identify the outcome, the intermediate, process, and dashboard measures to be collected, and the format in which to report these results. JJSES will be providing templates and suggested performance indicators for the counties.

EBP SERVICE CONTRACTS

Many of the services provided to youth under juvenile justice supervision are delivered by private sector agencies and contractors. These services range from drug treatment to mental health treatment, from education to employment services, and they are usually provided according to the protocols and modalities of the relevant discipline. So, for example, substance abuse treatment specialists will focus almost exclusively on the issues of addiction and desistance, while mental health clinicians will seek to apply some type of psychotherapeutic wellness model. Each provider will, in turn, define success with the youth as the future absence of those factors that initially led to the problem of immediate concern.

While such "modular" forms of service provision and treatment often work with children not involved in delinquency, interactions between criminogenic and other needs may hinder successful outcomes in terms of normal adolescent development for young people who have run afoul of the law. Unless criminogenic needs are addressed, the chances of changing delinquent behavior and reducing recidivism are greatly minimized.

To ensure that service providers for juveniles understand the special circumstances leading to juvenile offending, they must become versed in evidence-based practices and work collaboratively with juvenile probation departments to develop treatment methods and services. An important tool in achieving this goal is the EBP service contract which delineates the types

6 For a comprehensive list of possible performance measures, see *Criminal Justice Measures, Literature Review, Calendar Years 2000–2010* by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Office of Criminal Justice Systems Improvement, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Strategic Development.

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of services required. This type of contract should include an agreement to

- train service providers in those factors that influence juvenile delinquency and in the principles of EBP designed to deal with risk, criminogenic need, and responsivity factors
- establish multidimensional teams that include juvenile probation departments and service providers to conduct collaborative case management with youth and their families
- define, collaboratively, a research-based process and treatment modality that will address the criminogenic needs of the juvenile
- delineate both process and outcome measures for determining the success of the combined efforts of both the juvenile probation department and the service provider in assisting the youth to regain the path to normal adolescent development, thereby reducing the risk of future delinquency
- evaluate, using tools such as the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol, how effectively the program is matched to the needs of the youth and aligns with what the research evidence indicates works.

Research is clear that when dealing with troubled juveniles, segregating their adolescent and criminogenic issues into a series of discrete problems to be treated in isolation by a wide variety of professionals can only lead to confusion, ineffective outcomes, and even wasted resources (Holsinger, 1999; Lowenkamp, 2003). Through the use of EBP service contracts, such pitfalls can be avoided and juveniles can be treated in a holistic fashion that can enhance the possibility of success.

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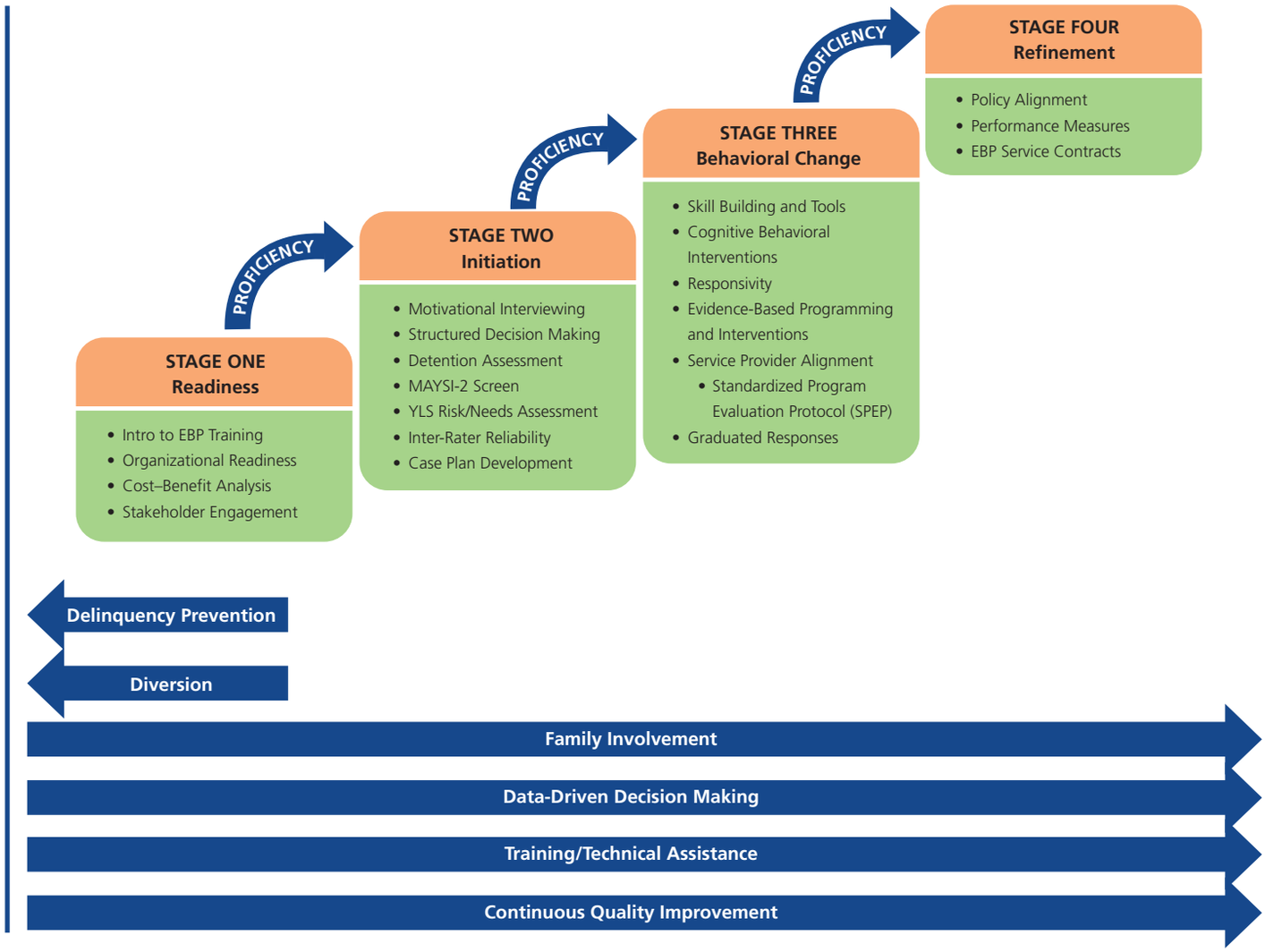
KEY JJSES BUILDING BLOCKS



"Great ideas need landing gear as well as wings."

C.D. Jackson

The Framework's four stages are strategically sequenced, building on each other to maximize successful outcomes. Some activities, however, cut across all stages and are considered to be fundamental building blocks of the JJSES model. They include the following:

- **Delinquency prevention:** An effective juvenile justice system relies on a comprehensive approach that includes addressing the influences that lead to delinquent behavior in the first place. There is a rich body of research literature to guide evidence-based delinquency prevention. Preventing delinquency through the large-scale, high-quality implementation of evidence-based prevention programs allows the juvenile justice system to focus its limited resources on those individuals and cases that

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require a formal response because of the severity of the offense or the risk level of the youth.

- **Diversion:** Another part of a comprehensive approach to juvenile justice is the provision of diversion services. Lower-risk juveniles are spared from the potentially harmful effects of juvenile justice system involvement while being given an opportunity to be held accountable through informal and non-stigmatizing processes.
- **Family involvement:** The impact of families on youthful behavior is well understood. A juvenile justice system must involve families at every stage of the process if behavioral change is to be long-lasting.
- **Data-driven decision making:** Outcomes will be enhanced when there is an ongoing collection and analysis of data to track performance and inform policy and practice.
- **Training and technical assistance:** Training is essential throughout all stages of JJSES, since each stage requires a different set of knowledge, skills, and practices. Similarly, technical assistance may be needed throughout all stages of JJSES.
- **Continuous quality improvement (CQI):** Performance will be enhanced when there is a process to examine existing practices to determine if they are meeting expectations. This examination requires data collection, observation, and a feedback mechanism. CQI provides an opportunity for the department to make small, continuous, incremental changes based on such feedback. Each major activity in JJSES should include a corresponding continuous quality improvement process.

DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

In meeting its public safety responsibilities, Pennsylvania has been proactive and has turned away from a purely reactive approach to delinquency in favor of one that supports programs that promote positive youth development in order to prevent delinquency from occurring in the first place. In fact, delinquency prevention may be the most cost-effective component of JJSES.

It is important that chief juvenile probation officers and juvenile court judges play an active role in local community prevention planning, whether it is by serving on advisory boards or planning committees or by utilizing the influence of the Court to create and sustain initiatives. Juvenile court judges can provide leadership to ensure that all stakeholders collaborate to promote positive youth development and to provide needed delinquency prevention services. Whether dealing with drug and alcohol, mental health, educational, or other issues, it is critical that child-serving agencies work together as part of a broad-based prevention environment in order to intervene as early and as effectively as possible to prevent delinquency.

It is incumbent upon probation administrators to fully understand the nature of delinquency risk factors, such as those identified by the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), to ensure that each county has an adequate array of services for addressing them. Academic failure, truancy, and early classroom conduct problems are risk factors for delinquency. Dropping out of school puts youth at risk in the short term, but also has lifelong consequences. More dropouts are unemployed than high school graduates and, if they do find jobs, they earn far less money than high school graduates (Loeber & Farrington, 1998).

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's prevention initiative, which began in 1994, was largely focused on supporting Communities That Care (CTC) and other proven programs designed to prevent or reduce problem behaviors in youth. Over 100 communities across the state have used the CTC community assessment and collaborative planning process. PCCD continues to support CTC in an effort to decrease risk factors and increase protective factors to enable young people to grow and develop in a healthy environment. CTC also provides communities with the foundation and technical assistance to implement evidence-based programs.

In addition, with support from the Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania's Resource Center for Evidence-Based Programs and Practices supports the proliferation of effective programs and practices, including those in the prevention arena, and coordinates the funding and implementation of these programs and practices across agency partners to ensure accountability and cost-effectiveness.[7]

DIVERSION

In 2005, Pennsylvania created a Mental Health/Juvenile Justice (MH/JJ) Workgroup in conjunction with its Models for Change initiative to better coordinate services for youth with mental

7 See also the US Department of Justice's website on effective, research-based adult and juvenile programs at http://www.crimesolutions.gov.

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health problems who become involved in the juvenile justice system. The resulting *Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Joint Policy Statement* established a goal of diverting children from formal court processing in order to avoid the negative long-term consequences of an adjudication of delinquency. In a related Models for Change initiative, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network (JIDAN) developed *The Pennsylvania Juvenile Collateral Consequences Checklist* to provide attorneys and other juvenile justice professionals with the most recent information regarding both the short-term and long-term consequences of adjudications of delinquency.

Pre-adjudication for all youth can occur at various decision-making points in the juvenile justice system. It can provide alternatives for youth who have not yet entered the juvenile justice system but who are at imminent risk of being charged with a delinquent act, and it can channel juveniles away from formal court processing. Pre-adjudication diversion can occur at the school, law enforcement, magisterial district judge, and juvenile court levels. Examples of pre-adjudication diversion programs include referrals for service at the law enforcement level, various types of community accountability boards such as youth aid panels and peer courts, summary offense alternative adjudication programs, informal adjustment and consent decree dispositions, and adjudications of dependency in lieu of delinquency adjudications.

To assist local jurisdictions in developing policies and procedures that are consistent with the mandates of current law and best practice standards, the Diversion Committee of the MH/JJ Workgroup produced a *Guide to Developing Pre-Adjudication Diversion Policy and Practice in Pennsylvania*. Its focus was to encourage opportunities for all youth (not just those experiencing mental health problems) who would otherwise face formal court processing in the juvenile justice system. Instead of adjudications of delinquency or summary offense convictions, youth could be held accountable for their actions and directed to alternative programs, including treatment when appropriate.

To sustain and advance the work of the MH/JJ Workgroup's Diversion Committee, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee established a Diversion Subcommittee to promote the development of local policies and the creation of pre-adjudication diversion programs to hold non-violent youthful offenders accountable for their offenses without proceeding to adjudications of delinquency or convictions for summary offenses. In June 2011, PCCD approved 13 grants totaling $1.5 million in federal funds to support the development of local policies and programs that are consistent with the *Guide to Developing Pre-Adjudication Diversion Policy and Practice in Pennsylvania*.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Behavioral change efforts must include a juvenile's family and other key adults engaged in the juvenile's support system, such as clergy or coaches, because they will assist in supporting and supervising the juvenile during probation (including helping the juvenile move through needed restorative actions, such as repairing harm to the victim, learning accountability, and developing competencies) and after completion of court involvement. Adult relationships are crucial in helping youth make good decisions as they mature; this is no less true for youth in conflict with the law. Probation practice needs to include this "community of concern," but most pointedly the family, by informing them about assessment results and treatment objectives, engaging them in identifying and supporting individualized goals for their children, and informing them of their children's progress. The core partnership with the family should be enhanced by formal and informal community supports, including mental health services, faith-based groups, and recreational resources such as sports teams.

Families will have varying levels of awareness and understanding of adolescent brain development and of parenting approaches that foster healthy, safe behaviors. Juvenile justice professionals have the opportunity to facilitate families' access to information and supports that help them understand these critical and complex concepts and to ensure that they are engaging with families in a culturally sensitive manner. By including the family at this level, juvenile justice professionals reinforce that families are ultimately responsible for their children.

The importance of families in achieving successful outcomes for juveniles is not a new revelation. The critical role that families play in achieving Pennsylvania's balanced and restorative justice mission is recognized in *Balanced and Restorative Justice in Pennsylvania: A New Mission and Changing Roles within the Juvenile Justice System* (Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, 1997), in the guiding principles and goals that were adopted by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee in 1998, and in the 2009 monograph entitled *Family Involvement in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* (Family Involvement Subcommittee of

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the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Workgroup for Models for Change–Pennsylvania & Family Involvement Workgroup of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officer's Balanced & Restorative Justice Implementation Committee). The challenge has been in transforming these principles and goals into effective relationships and partnerships between juvenile justice agencies and families at individual case, program, and policy levels.

Clearly, parents and caregivers play a crucial role in facilitating adolescents' development and their transition to adulthood. It is not surprising that research on the role of family participation in programming confirms its importance for juvenile delinquency outcomes (Mendel, 2003, 2010; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997). Programs that work closely with juveniles' families, such as Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, can reduce recidivism by up to 18 percent lower than institutional placements (Drake, Aos, & Miller, 2009). And, keeping juveniles close to their families during placement gives them opportunities to repair and renew relationships and to practice skills that will help them address challenges they may face upon release. This practice of maintaining close proximity to home life brings about better effects on recidivism (McCord, Spatz Widom, & Crowell, 2001). In another study on the Family Solutions Program, which provides interventions for juveniles involved in the justice system and for their families, researchers found that juveniles involved in the program were less likely to reoffend than those who did not enter the program or who dropped out (Quinn & Van Dyke, 2004).

More recent efforts to improve family involvement in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system grew out of the vision articulated in the *Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Joint Policy Statement* developed in conjunction with Pennsylvania's Models for Change initiative. The Family Involvement Committee of the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Workgroup commissioned a series of focus groups to gain the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders. Sixteen focus groups, representing the ethnic, cultural, economic, and geographic diversity of the state, were conducted during 2008–2009. Focus group participants included juveniles, parents, juvenile court judges, juvenile probation officers, district attorneys, juvenile defenders, adolescent psychologists and psychiatrists, a wide range of service providers, and others. The *Family Involvement in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System* monograph captured the results of these focus group discussions and was a focus of the 2009 Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice.

Four themes emerged consistently across the focus groups:

- Families need access to effective early prevention and intervention services.
- Respect should be the basis for all interactions between families and system partners.
- Opportunities should exist for family involvement in the development of local juvenile court policies and practices.
- Statewide laws and policies should be examined to eliminate barriers and to increase capacity for effective family involvement.

The Balanced and Restorative Justice Implementation Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers created a Family Involvement Committee to sustain this critically important work. The Family Involvement Committee created *A Family Guide to the Pennsylvania Justice System,* dedicated to helping families to understand Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system and to access needed information and supports. Additionally, the Family Involvement Committee developed a training curriculum for juvenile justice professionals designed to enhance family involvement in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

In an evidence-based environment, case and policy decisions made by juvenile justice system stakeholders are most effective when guided by research evidence. Where published research evidence does not exist, and even when it does, departments and systems should use local data to assist in decision making. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC), in its publication *A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems,* defines data-driven decision making as the "ongoing collection and analysis of data to track performance and inform policy and practice."

In the Framework, NIC adopted four principles to guide systems' evidence-based work. Principle Four is described as follows:

> *The criminal justice system will continually learn and improve when professionals make decisions based on the collection, analysis, and use of data and information.*

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The NIC initiative identified ten points in the justice system where key decisions are made (e.g., cite vs. release, detention, plea, adjudication), arguing for the application of data and research at each point.

Clearly, an evidence-based juvenile justice system would perform most optimally if it collected and analyzed data both for policy and practice-related decisions. In this way, the system could be data-driven and avoid what a prosecutor involved in the NIC initiative called "seat-of-the-pants judgments."

Learning Systems

Learning systems are those that adapt to a dynamic environment through a process of continuous information collection and analysis. Through this process of individual and collective learning, entities—whether a single professional working with an individual case, an agency monitoring its overall operations, or the criminal justice system as a whole monitoring system efficiency and effectiveness—improve their processes and activities in a constant effort to achieve better results at all levels. In addition to facilitating continuous improvements in harm reduction within an agency or system, ongoing data collection adds to the overall body of knowledge in the field about what works and what does not.

A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems, 3rd Edition

TRAINING

Training is a key element of the successful implementation of evidence-based practices in juvenile justice. Without it, departments and service providers will not have the knowledge, skills, and perspectives required to guide juveniles through the social and behavioral processes of behavioral change and recidivism reduction.

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of training. A team of researchers from the Department of Public Safety in Canada conducted a randomized, controlled study of the impact of training probation staff in the risk–need–responsivity (RNR) model of offender rehabilitation. The evaluators randomly assigned 80 officers to either a training (experimental) or a no training (control) condition. These officers' supervision sessions with 143 probationers were then audiotaped to determine their adherence to the principles of RNR. The results were startling. The trained officers consistently demonstrated better RNR practices and a more frequent use of cognitive behavioral techniques to deal with the antisocial attitudes of their clients than their untrained colleagues. The offenders they supervised also achieved significantly lower recidivism rates. In the words of the researchers, "the findings suggest that training in the evidence-based principles of the RNR model can have an important impact on the behavior of probation officers and their clients" (Bonta et al., 2011).

EBP training must adhere to a variety of principles in order to be effective within a juvenile justice organization:

- **It must be strategic in nature.** All too often EBP training is an afterthought. A common scenario is for a few people to sit around a table, make ad hoc decisions about what staff need to learn, and then ask others in the department to "go do it." This approach is not only a recipe for failure, but it can also result in a tremendous waste of scarce resources. Administrative and support personnel all need to play an active part in determining an organization's strategy for implementing EBP. They must understand the business model being followed, the goals to be achieved, and the resources needed to produce desired outcomes. In turn, they must bring to the discussion with executive leadership their knowledge about adult learning theory and human behavioral change in order to ensure that an integrated, comprehensive, and coherent educational strategy is put into place.
- **It must be extensive in scope.** In any effort to implement EBP, no member of an organization can remain uninformed about the new vision, model, and method for doing business. This includes executive management, who frequently see themselves as "too busy" to spare the time for learning, all the way down the hierarchy to support staff, who frequently, and mistakenly, are viewed as uninterested in understanding "the big picture."
- **It must be intensive in scope.** Learning does not end at a classroom's door, if it even occurs in a traditional classroom in the first place. Whether people are being exposed to new knowledge, skills, or approaches to conducting business, what they master in the immediate education context will soon evaporate without ongoing testing, support, and reinforcement after they return to their daily routines. Supervisors, managers, and executive leadership all play a vital role in this process. They must know more than their staff about what is being learned and they must become versed in the techniques of coaching and human behavioral change.

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- **It must take place in a variety of learning environments.** While the classroom is an important training environment, classroom training is time-intensive and expensive to conduct. Beyond the facility costs and trainer fees are the additional travel, overtime, and temporary staff replacement costs. As such, classroom training should be reserved for imparting those skills and practices that require face-to-face contact and rigorous practice between facilitators and participants, and it should be used after students have been taught and tested on the foundations of EBP in other learning environments. Electronic methods of teaching, such as webinars, blogs, and other forms of online information sharing, are the most efficient ways to impart new knowledge to staff. Once students have this knowledge, they are much better prepared to benefit from the classroom experience than those who come with little or no advanced preparation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

JJSES makes available to local jurisdictions a number of products and services to advance its goal of improving Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, especially as it relates to public safety. These products and services address a wide spectrum of issues, from organizational capacity to organizational development, from skill enhancements to performance measures. They address the three key areas that enable change to occur on the direct-service level: staff knowledge, skills, and attitudes; organizational infrastructure needs (e.g., policies and performance measures); and tools (e.g., assessment tools and checklists). For example, many organizations have implemented motivational interviewing as an important service enhancement to prepare youth for change. However, despite massive amounts of training and supports, most of the 200 plus research studies indicate limitations on improved outcomes (Miller, 2010). The technical assistance offered under JJSES is designed to counteract these threats to success by examining the studies and devising more effective means of supporting motivational interviewing.

Successful technology transfer requires more than practitioners' exposure to well-conceived and research-based processes, no matter how well organized and structured. It requires the skillful orchestrating of the change process, including both the insertion of evidence-based practices and the removal of organizational cultural vestiges that choke innovation.

Different Paths to Successful Implementation

The stages and activities proposed under the JJSES model were built on the positive experiences of practitioners who were early adopters of evidence-based practices. Still, there is no straight line to successful implementation. Organizations are diverse in their needs, cultures, and resources. What works in one area may not work in another; therefore, the JJSES stages and activities may need to be customized to reflect local experiences.

In recognition of these local nuances, JJSES has adopted a "flexible–rigid" approach. That is, the stages, competencies, and performance measures identified throughout the JJSES stages are largely fixed or static, but the manner in which departments apply some of the proposed processes will likely need adjusting. For example, risk assessments should be completed and submitted prior to disposition in order to help courts impose conditions that reflect youths' criminogenic needs and risk levels. However, a local jurisdiction may not be able to meet this standard due to the manner in which plea negotiations are conducted or because of limits on staff resources. Instead, prosecution, defense counsel, and the courts may reach an agreement that they will not impose specific programming requirements upon disposition but rather allow probation to do so after the risk/needs assessment is completed.

Given the myriad of anticipated challenges in implementing evidence-based practices, JJSES will provide technical assistance support in three ways: an initial consultation to describe the JJSES process and resources, recommended tools for the assessment of organizational readiness and alignment, and ongoing technical assistance.

Given these and a myriad of other anticipated challenges in implementing evidence-based practices, JJSES will provide technical assistance in three ways:

1. **Introduction to JJSES:** When chief probation officers are considering moving into Stage One of JJSES, they may require technical assistance. Various points of contact for technical assistance have been established to
   - review the supporting tools, trainings, and documentation that will aid chief probation officers' efforts
   - discuss the availability of the organizational readiness assessment tool and the process by which it is best administered

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- determine if the department would like an independent assessment of organizational readiness
- determine if the department would like an independent assessment of organizational alignment
- explore with the department possible ongoing technical assistance issues
- review the proficiency measures to be achieved at the end of each stage before moving onto the next stage.

2. **Independent Assessment:** As part of Stage One, a county may request an independent assessment. There are two types of assessments:
   - **Readiness:** The readiness assessment consists of an organizational survey that helps the chief probation officer identify issues that may need attention before embarking on an EBP initiative, thereby increasing the likelihood that the proposed EBP changes will be received and implemented by staff and management.
   - **Alignment:** JJSES will provide technical assistance by reviewing existing department practices and policies to determine the degree to which they are in alignment with research evidence. Areas of strength would receive less attention in Stages Two, Three, and Four. Areas in need of improvement would be given more attention. This assessment information would be compiled in a report and would provide the chief with the building blocks needed to complete an action plan. The action plan is one of the recommended activities for Stage One.
3. **Ongoing Technical Assistance:** It is anticipated that chiefs will encounter challenges that could become major hindrances to successful JJSES implementation. Probation chiefs may request ongoing technical assistance. This assistance may include access to internal specialists (i.e., other chiefs or supervisors who have encountered similar challenges) or other expertise.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The term "continuous quality improvement," or "CQI," is used to describe a process that, when effectively implemented, can better ensure that a set of desired practices are delivered in the manner they were intended, continuously and over time (Carey, 2010). Research demonstrates that when departments introduce sound CQI processes, they realize more effective outcomes. For example, when departments effectively train their staff in new skill areas, improved outcomes result (Bonta, Bogue, Crowley, & Motiuk, 2001); when they establish internal CQI processes around strategies designed to reduce risk of reoffense, recidivism rates decrease (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2002); and when they modify their approaches based on the results of their CQI processes, they realize substantially better outcomes, including cost–benefit and effect–size results that are four times greater than those of departments that do not use CQI to improve their processes (Carey, Finigan, & Pukstas, 2008).

Definitions

For the purposes of the Monograph, **continuous quality improvement (CQI)** is defined as:

A set of professional development opportunities that generate current, specific feedback for the purpose of ensuring that services and practices are delivered in the intended manner.

Quality assurance (QA) is defined as:

An audit process that retrospectively examines practices for the purposes of identifying and correcting divergence from policy or protocol.

Realizing reductions in recidivism outcomes is not as simple as implementing a new process or providing staff with a one-time introduction to a new skill set. Indeed, new skills and processes take time to fully integrate and may, at least at first, result in reluctance and discomfort among those who are affected by the change. Research suggests that the amount of time devoted to the change process is an indicator of whether or not superior results will be derived (Flores, Lowenkamp, Holsinger, & Latessa, 2006). Therefore, departments interested in improving outcomes must commit to an implementation process that ensures that staff receive adequate initial training as well as ongoing encouragement, feedback, and coaching designed to improve knowledge, skills, confidence, and competency.

The purposes of a CQI process are to

- identify department and staff strengths (e.g., processes that are working effectively, advanced knowledge and skill level of staff)
- identify areas in need of improvement
- provide staff with specific and direct feedback in order to support incremental improvements in their skills

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- identify enhancements to existing processes and structures (e.g., additional training, increased oversight by supervisors) that will support the greater achievement of the department's goals.

Common Quotes in Support of CQI

"The worker respects what the supervisor inspects."

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

In particular, CQI processes might focus on the following:

- **inter-rater reliability:** the degree to which assessment tools are being administered consistently across users in accordance with the author's instructions.
- **case planning:** the degree to which staff develop case plans according to the "SMART" principles (i.e., specific, measurable, appropriate, relevant, and time bound), use offender strengths, identify and address triggers, integrate responsivity factors, and manage treatment dosage requirements.
- **one-on-one interactions:** the degree to which staff are using the four core competencies in their one-on-one sessions. The four core competencies are establishing a professional alliance, conducting skill practice in the criminogenic areas, conducting effective case management, and reinforcing prosocial attitudes and redirecting antisocial attitudes.
- **cognitive behavioral facilitation:** the degree to which facilitators are conducting cognitive behavioral programming sessions according to the author's instructions, including utilizing effective group facilitation skills.
- **motivational interviewing:** the degree to which staff are using motivational interviewing techniques.

AN EVOLVING FUTURE

As the JJSES initiative unfolds, we expect that juvenile justice system practices will increasingly be based on sound evidence and that they will be implemented with high levels of fidelity. A key fact of evidence-based practices and programs is that, when they are at their best, they continually evolve as new practices are researched and more broadly implemented. Our goal is to see our entire juvenile justice service system demonstrating high levels of fidelity to cost-effective practices, including community-based, locally developed program models.

The common elements of programs or practices that produce behavior change among juveniles (such as cognitive behavioral groups) are well established, and the research exists to guide the development and use of effective practices. Getting from here to there can take many tracks. This Monograph establishes the beginning path.

JJSES will be driven by its three key strategies for enhancing the juvenile justice system: employing evidence-based practices, collecting and analyzing data to measure these efforts, and using the data to continuously improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. We anticipate and plan for continuous improvement and change. Therefore, this Monograph is a start—a clear framework with key goals—but the specific components of the framework will require updating in the near future as new evidence-based practices and programs emerge and new ways of ensuring cost-efficient model fidelity are developed.

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The Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy initiative is the result of a partnership between three organizations with complementary missions, all of which seek to enhance the quality of care for those involved in the juvenile justice system:

- The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, established in 1959, is responsible for advising juvenile courts concerning the proper care and maintenance of delinquent and dependent children; establishing standards governing the administrative practices and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts; establishing personnel practices and employment standards used in probation offices; collecting, compiling, and publishing juvenile court statistics; and administering a grant-in-aid program to improve county juvenile probation services.
- The mission of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is to enhance the quality and coordination of criminal and juvenile justice systems, to facilitate the delivery of services to victims of crime, and to increase the safety of our communities.
- The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers is a non-profit organization that was created in 1967 to further the mission of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System by promoting the use of best practices among juvenile probation departments across the Commonwealth.

Juvenile Court Judges' Commission | Pennsylvania Judicial Center | 601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 9100 | P.O. Box 62425 | Harrisburg, PA 17106-2425

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency | 3101 North Front Street | Harrisburg, PA 17110 | (800) 692-7292

Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers | info@pachiefprobationofficers.org

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