BEYOND BARS

Keeping Young People Safe at Home and Out of Youth Prisons

Report can be downloaded at www.collab4youth.org
INTRODUCTIONS

Hernan Carvente
Program Analyst at the Vera Institute of Justice

Shaena Fazal
National Policy Director, Youth Advocate Programs

Deborah Hodges
Lucas County Juvenile Court Administrator

Clinton Lacey
Director, Washington DC Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services
• Moving from a facility-based to a community-based system that keeps young people in the community and with their families

• Credible Messenger Initiative
The “Credible Messenger Initiative” at the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) is a transformative mentoring intervention program for youth committed to the agency, with a restorative justice philosophy for young people in the community at large. The mission of the initiative is to connect all young people in the care and custody of DYRS to healthy homes and supportive communities, and to provide preventative supports to all youth in Washington D.C.
Credible Messengers, cont’d

Credible messengers are neighborhood leaders, experienced youth advocates and individuals with relevant life experiences whose role is to help youth transform attitudes and behaviors around violence. They serve young people whose needs go far beyond the traditional mentoring approach of companionship, confidence-building and typical academic, social or career guidance.

They are able to connect with the most challenging young people because they:

• Come from the same communities
• Are formerly incarcerated or were involved in the justice system ● Have turned their lives around
• Demonstrate integrity and transformation ● Are skilled and trained in mentoring young people

• Source: http://dyrs.dc.gov/page/credible-messenger-initiative
Roadmap For Today’s Presentation

• About the National Collaboration for Youth, Youth First Initiative and YAP (sponsors of today’s webinar)
• Thanks to our funders, the Annie E Casey Foundation and the Public Welfare Foundation, both committed to juvenile justice reform, reducing racial disparities and improving child and family well-being
• Overview of the Report
• Hear from the experts
• Q&A
• Housekeeping
SHAENA FAZAL
Youth Advocate Programs National Policy Director

sfazal@yapinc.org
202.594.6893
www.yapinc.org
How we define “continuum of care”

**Definition:** A continuum of care is an array of meaningful non-residential community-based programs, supports, resources and services specifically designed to meet the individual needs of young people and their families in their homes. Continua of care cultivate the strengths of youth and families and provide them with what they might need at different stages of intensity in order to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system and confinement.

**Impact:** In a continuum of care, youth will be able to develop AUTONOMY, COMPETENCE and a SENSE OF RELATEDNESS or belonging to their families and communities in a way that helps to ESTABLISH OR IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES.
Setting the Context
1. Promote positive youth justice/development and an increased sense of relatedness for young people.

2. Define public safety as more than law enforcement.

3. Shift from a slot-based system to a needs-based system.

4. Services must be culturally competent and neighborhood-based.

5. Ensure that services, programs and resources are family-centered.

6. Include young people’s ideas when creating the continua.

7. Identify community strengths and assets.
“Communities can only be built by focusing on the strengths and capacities of the citizens who call that community home. Those who have escaped the lures of deficiency, therefore, have been drawing up a new map based on old truths, an ‘Assets Map’... At the center of the map, and of the community building process, lie the ‘gifts’ of individual residents, their knowledge, skills, resources, values, and commitments. -

John Kretzman Building Communities from the Inside Out
A Better Model for Serving Youth With Complex Needs

TRADITIONAL CONTINUUM FOR YOUTH WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

- Youth not admitted to program because of behavior
- Accepted to existing program slot/bed/seat
- Expelled from program due to behavior
- Youth absconds from program
- One size does not fit all

INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Begins with identifying needs and strengths of youth/family
2. Youth/Family have voice and choice throughout the planning process
3. Services and supports are created to meet the needs and nurture the strengths of the youth and family in the community
4. Existing programs adapt their services to meet unique needs according to ISP
5. Credible messengers have key role in providing support and services
6. Flexible Fund purchases services and supports that do not exist currently
7. Needs change as time goes on and so do services and supports

Resize services to fit the family
Core Components of a Continuum of Care

- Behavioral Health & Holistic Victim Services
- Respite and Support for Families with Complex Needs
- Substance Use
- Pathways for Future Economic Opportunity
- Access to Education
- Safe Places and Opportunities to Recreate
- Gang Intervention
- Youth Who Failed Out of Traditional Programs
- Mobile Crisis Intervention Outreach
- Volunteer & Paid Mentoring

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Key Strategies

• WRAPAROUND PLANNING PROCESS
• CREDIBLE MESSENGERS
• FAMILY ADVOCACY
• FLEXIBLE FUND FOR EXTRAORDINARY NEEDS
• CRISIS AND SAFETY PLANNING
HOW TO DEVELOP A CONTINUUM OF CARE

Step #1: Establish a Sense of Urgency
- Rejecting youth prisons as the best way to meet youth needs, achieve public safety and improve youth outcomes

Step #2: Creating the Guiding Coalition
- Establishing expertise of youth, family and community in addition to that of systems and providers to safely decarcerate young people

Step #3: Developing a Vision and Strategy
- Defining a set of principles unique to community and culture for how to best serve young people in need

Step #4: Communicating the Change Vision
- Community and staff forums to share the vision, strategy and principles

Step #5: Empowering Broad-based Action
- Creating and funding a plan to implement the vision, strategy and principles that has been shared with others

Step #6: Generating Short-term Wins
- Track and acknowledge early, positive outcomes, including nontraditional outcomes for a juvenile justice system, such as stronger families

Step #7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
- Official redirection of dollars earmarked for community vs. facility

Step #8: Anchoring New Approaches in Culture
- Closing youth prisons and depending instead on the community and its array of services to safely meet the needs of any young person and their family, in the community
“Detention and youth prison will always be the default, so if we don’t have alternatives, and a full continuum even for our toughest kids, they are going to be locked up.”
Lucas County Juvenile Court

Denise Navarre Cubbon: Administrative Judge
Connie Zemmelman: Judge
Deborah Hodges: Court Administrator
Lucas County is committed to keeping the community safe through evidenced based screenings, assessments & meaningful interventions for each child & family.

**Initiatives:**
- Community Engagement
- JDAI
- Positive Youth Justice
- Crossover
- Reclaiming Futures
- Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care
Lucas County Juvenile Court Total Commitments (includes Total Revocations) to Ohio Department of Youth Services 1985 - 2016

97.79% Reduction Of Commitments From 1989 - 2014
DRAMATIC REDUCTIONS in MINORITY SSO ARRESTS

SSO arrests booked in the Lucas County Juvenile Detention Center of black youth dropped by 95% since 2009.
Since conducting our system assessment Lucas County has continued to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders to begin to address each area of opportunity.

**MAJOR THEMES IN LUCAS COUNTY**

**Dispositional Decision Making**
- Develop a Structured Decision Making process that assists in structuring dispositional recommendation

**Racial & Ethnic Equity**
- Collaborate with The W. Haywood Burns Institute to develop equitable interventions
- Conduct in depth case analysis to identify potential drivers

**Probation**
- Develop an alternate track for low level offenses to be served through community partners
- Frontline practice reform with Positive Youth Justice

**Community-Based Services**
- Seek out new opportunities to safely serve youth in their community

**Family Engagement**
- Develop peer to peer supports for families
- Implement a steering committee for families to participate in reform efforts

**Collaboration**
- Reach out to grassroots organizations for partnerships
In addition to analyzing quantitative data we spent time asking children and their families for feedback about our services.

**Positive Changes and Experiences**

“We have a lot better communication. He is more respectful and he does a lot more then before at home”

“Teaching him how to prevent being in a bad spot or if he finds himself in a bad situation how to get out [was the most helpful].”

“Probation was the most helpful of all the programs I was in because they keep you out of trouble and help you set rules”

“The MST and YAP program helped me and my mom work out all this that we were struggling with”

**Struggles and frustrations**

“The amount of required communication [was least helpful]. If he was doing ok then you do not hear a lot from probation or anyone. It was when kids are messing up that you hear from probation”

“It’s been a long tiring process”

“I feel like probation has taken away my childhood”

“{Probation should} work with them instead of locking us up getting us in the habit of doing time and not caring”
So….. what about high risk youth?
The Balanced and Restorative Justice Model still rocks!

But...each case must be viewed through the lens of Positive Youth Justice and Safety.
Positive Youth Development is:
1. A comprehensive way of thinking about the development of adolescents and factors that help them transition to adulthood successfully;
2. Strength-based; and
3. A resilience-oriented perspective on adolescence.

Positive Youth Justice is an outgrowth of the Positive Youth Development. However Positive Youth Justice is:
1. A reduced set of core elements from PYD concepts;
2. A framework that joins the realities of operating in a youth justice practice with the wide range of ideas in PYD; and
3. Rooted in theoretical and empirical literature about adolescent development but customized for the youth justice environment.


- Develop an alternate track for low level offenses to be served through community partners
- Develop a Misdemeanor Services Track
- Frontline practice reform with Positive Youth Justice
In order to root our practices in PYJ, we first must view young people as resources and shift some of our assumptions about them.

### Changing the Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSUMPTIONS</th>
<th>Youth as Victim</th>
<th>Youth as Villain</th>
<th>Youth as Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origins of Most</strong></td>
<td>Symptom of underlying disturbance</td>
<td>Anti-social impulses, lack of restraint due to permissiveness and the absence of punishment</td>
<td>Normative response to adolescent needs for status, belonging, power &amp; excitement, lack of empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent Behavior</td>
<td><strong>How Delinquent Youth</strong></td>
<td>Fundamentally different in psychological and emotional makeup</td>
<td><strong>How Delinquent Youth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare with Other Adolescents</td>
<td><strong>How Delinquent Youth</strong></td>
<td>Fundamentally different motivations and impulses toward deviant behavior</td>
<td><strong>How Delinquent Youth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for Behavior</td>
<td>Incapable of conventional behavior without therapeutic interventions</td>
<td>Incapable of conventional behavior without strict discipline and the threat of punishment</td>
<td>Inherently capable of conventional behavior with sufficient access to supports and pro-social opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td><strong>Principal Intervention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Role of Treatment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Risks of Treatment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Individual or family-based therapeutic treatment</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Could fail to address underlying cause(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Treatment</td>
<td>Deterrence and retributive punishment</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Could delay or impede deterrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks of Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Could introduce stigma or harm—i.e., iatrogenic effects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Understanding that youth are a resource to us, we then seek to positively intervene with opportunities for them to **Learn & Do** as well as **Attach & Belong**.

**Learning/Doing**
- Develop new skills
- Actively get to use new skills
- Take on new roles and responsibilities
- Develop self-efficacy and personal confidence

**Attaching/Belonging**
- Become an active part of a pro-social group
- Develop and enjoy a sense of belonging
- Place high value on service to other and being part of the community

Working with high risk youth in the community requires a shift in thinking.

- Need to get more comfortable with youth falling down.

- Reduce probation violations for behavior that other non-involved justice teenagers are involved in.....our data showed violations were a major factor in kids being sent to ODYS.

- Working with high risk youth in the community requires a commitment and philosophy to keep coming back to the table with the youth to address behaviors and problem solve solutions. This is an opportunity to teach problem solving skills to youth and families. Repetition is required!

- We have to believe that incarceration is not the answer............except for the youth that truly pose a real threat to public safety.
How have we managed these dramatic changes in philosophy and practice over time?

MANAGING CHANGE IS IMPORTANT!!

Strong Judicial and Administrative Leadership

Why are we doing this? How are we doing this? What am I supposed to do now?

Staff training based on emerging research

Staff input and participation

Role of middle managers is critical

Have Fun and Celebrate Success!

Learning While Doing in the Human Services Sector. Annie E. Casey Foundation and Casey Family Services
HERNAN CARVENTE
Program Analyst, Vera Institute of Justice

www.vera.org
hcarvente@vera.org
212.376.3113
What does youth engagement mean?

• Youth engagement is the result when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change. This means involving youth in planning and in making decisions that affect themselves and others (ACT for Youth Center of Excellence, 2017).

• Youth engagement happens in **youth-adult partnerships** that are structured so that both groups contribute, teach, and learn from each other (ACT for Youth Center of Excellence, 2017).
Engagement v. Partnership

**Engagement**
- One time opportunities to provide input
- Little to no follow-up
- On the agenda but not at the table
- Dictionary Definition: *An arrangement to meet or be present at a specified time and place*

**Partnership**
- Shared-decision making power
- Consistent Follow-up
- On the agenda and actively engaged and included in at the table
- Dictionary Definition: *A relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities.*
Examples

• Annie E. Casey Foundation’s – Youth Advisory Council
• Vera Institute of Justice – Collaborative Research Approach
• Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice – Youth Fellowship Program
• Justice for Families – Founded and run by parents and families who have experienced the juvenile justice system
• Center for Court Innovation – Youth Justice Board
“We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems. Community exists for the sake of belonging and takes its identity from the gifts, generosity, and accountability of its citizens. It is not defined by its fears, its isolation, or its penchant for retribution.”

- John McKnight
Thank you!