

JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMS: BACKGROUND AND IMPACT

Alison Greene, PhD

Department of Applied Health Science, Indiana University

Southwest Institute for Research on Women, University of Arizona

Family Impact Seminar ♦ Indiana State House ♦ November 21, 2017

BACKGROUND ON JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMS

WHAT IS JUVENILE DIVERSION?

Programs that divert youth from involvement in the juvenile justice system; an intervention strategy intended to hold youth accountable without formal court processing

GOALS:

- **Reduce recidivism or the occurrence of problem behaviors**
- **Minimize a youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system**
- Provide services to youth
- Reduce system costs
- Reduce unnecessary social control

WHY DIVERT FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM?

- There are youth who become involved with the juvenile justice system
 - for relatively minor and non-violent offenses
 - who have substance abuse and/or mental health treatment needs
- Justice system involvement may increase their risk and probability of reoffending
 - Labeling youth “delinquent”
 - Exposure to more advanced delinquent youth
- Risk-taking behavior is part of the developmental period of adolescence

HOW TO DIVERT FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM?

Juvenile diversion programs vary in terms of approach, method, and implementation process:

- ❖ Point of Contact
- ❖ Decision-maker(s)
- ❖ Target Population
- ❖ Setting
- ❖ Type and Structure
- ❖ Community-based services
- ❖ Family-involvement
- ❖ Consequences for unsuccessful completion
- ❖ Benefits for successful program completion

IMPACT OF JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMS

OUTCOMES

- Mixed (and limited) results on the impact of juvenile diversion
 - Recidivism rates
 - Engagement in delinquent behavior
 - Behavior problems
- “Net widening”
- Existing research is inconclusive as to the effectiveness of diversion
- Variability among programs creates a challenge in assessing effectiveness
- Yet, promising guidelines regarding program characteristics

EXAMPLE: EXAMINING OUTCOMES

National Cross-site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) and Reclaiming Futures (RF)

Select Key Findings:

- FINDING 1: Compared to Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOPs), JDCs overall were *more effective* at reducing substance use *among youth with relatively more substance use at program intake*.
- FINDING 2: Juvenile Drug Court/Reclaiming Futures (JDC/RF) programs were *more effective* at reducing criminal behavior, than non-RF JDCs and IOPs *among youth with relatively more criminal activity at program intake*.

EXAMPLE: PROGRAM CHARACTERISTIC OUTCOMES

FINDING 3: Specific program characteristics had desirable impact on youth outcomes:

- Having a defined target population and eligibility criteria
- Utilization of gender-appropriate treatment
- Utilization of policies and procedures responsive to cultural differences
- Utilization of a non-adversarial approach
- Coordination with the school system
- Utilization of sanctions to modify non-compliance
- Utilization of random and observed drug testing

EXAMPLE: COMMUNITY-RELATED OUTCOMES

- FINDING 4: Integrated systems of care were particularly critical to effectively serving substance abuse treatment needs
- FINDING 5: JDC/RF programs were more successful at reducing substance use with heavy substance users when the programs more fully implemented:
 - community engagement
 - collaborative partnerships
 - educational linkages
 - community transition

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXAMPLE STUDY

- Require Parent/Caregiver Participation
- Improve Access to JDC Services
- Provide Resources for Family Members
- Engage Families from the Bench

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- Importance of goals
- Implicit bias and disproportionate minority representation
- Guidelines for planning or improving a juvenile diversion program
- Consistency across programs
- Need for additional research

- Bishop, D. M., 2000. "Juvenile Offenders in the Adult Criminal Justice System," *Crime and Justice* 27 (2000), <https://doi.org/10.1086/652199>
- Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2016). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 16-4984, NSDUH Series H-51). Retrieved from <http://samhsa.gov/data/>
- DevelopCenter for Juvenile Justice Reform. (2011). *Juvenile Diversion Guidebook*. <http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/301>
- ment Services Group, Inc. 2017. "Diversion Programs." Literature review. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Diversion_Programs.pdf Prepared by Development Services Group, Inc., under cooperative agreement number 2013-JF-FX-K002
- Harris, P.W., Lockwood, B., Mengers, L, & Stoodley, B. H., 2011. "Measuring Recidivism in Juvenile Corrections." *OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice* 1(1): 1-16.
- Holman, B., et al. *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*. Justice Policy Institute. No Place For Kids. Available at www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-NoPlaceForKidsFullReport-2011.pdf.
- Korchmaros, J. D., Stevens, S., & Greene, A. (April, 2016). Key Findings of the National Cross-Site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures. Paper presented at the *Reclaiming Futures National Conference*, Miami, FL.
- McCord, J., Widom, C. S., & Crowell, N.A. 2001. "Race, Crime, and Juvenile Justice: The Issue of Racial Disparity." In J. McCord, C.S. Widom, and N.A. Crowell (eds.). *Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Crime: Panel on Juvenile Crime: Prevention, Treatment, and Control*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press
- OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*. Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/qa05101.asp?qaDate=2014>. Revised on October 10, 2017.
- OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*. Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/corrections/qa08201.asp?qaDate=2015>. Released on June 01, 2017.
- Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C., & Guckenburg, S. 2013. *Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency*. No. 9 of Crime Prevention Research Review. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <http://www.ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0692-pub.pdf>.
- Schwalbe, C. S., Gearing, R. E., Mackenzie, M. J., Brewer, K. B., & Ibrahim, R. 2012. "A Meta-Analysis of Experimental Studies of Diversion Programs for Juvenile Offenders." *Clinical Psychology Review* 32: 26-33.
- Wilson, H. A., & Hoge, R. D. 2013. "The Effect of Youth Diversion Programs on Recidivism." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 40(5):497-518.

QUESTIONS?

Alison Greene, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Applied Health Science
Indiana University
(812) 855-8795
greeneiu@Indiana.edu