The NJJEC Bulletin

NJJEC is a project of the Justice Research and Statistics Association funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). NJJEC’s purpose is to improve the evaluation capacity of states, localities, and tribes and facilitate the use of evidence-based programs and practices in juvenile justice. The NJJEC Bulletin is disseminated directly to subscribers and posted on the NJJEC website, and provides information related to juvenile justice evaluation that is of interest to state, local, and tribal juvenile justice professionals.

We welcome your participation! If you would like to submit an article, suggest a news item for the Bulletin, or ask a question about evaluation, e-mail njjec@jrsa.org. For more information about the resources available through the National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center, visit the NJJEC website.

What’s Going On at NJJEC?

NJJEC staff are developing a webinar on assessment and screening tools, including some of the basic considerations in selecting, implementing, and validating these tools in different juvenile justice settings.

NJJEC staff will participate in a panel entitled A New Look at Evidence-Based Resources at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice’s 2014 Annual Conference on Friday, June 20. The panel will provide an overview of evidence-based practice resources and practical ways to use the information they provide. The panel includes representatives from the Development Services Group and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. See the Upcoming Events of Interest section or the CJJ website for more information on the conference!

Upcoming Events of Interest

77th Annual National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
July 13-16

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will hold its 77th Annual Conference July 13 through 16 in Chicago, Illinois. The conference focuses on topics of interest to juvenile justice professionals in the judicial community, including family violence, child testimony, and detention alternatives. Review the schedule, find information about the preconference seminar on working with adolescents with substance abuse issues, and register online.

The National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health
Training Institutes
July 16-20

The National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development will hold its 2014 Training Institutes in

Do you have a suggestion for a new webinar topic or resource? Email njjec@jrsa.org!
Washington, DC July 16 through 20. The 2014 Training Institutes on *Improving Children’s Mental Health Care in an Era of Change, Challenge and Innovation: The Role of the System of Care Approach* are designed to assist policymakers, service providers, and evaluators in implementing effective practices. The agenda and registration information are available online.

**Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2014 Annual Conference June 18-21**

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) will host its 2014 Annual Conference June 18 through 21 in Washington, DC. CJJ is a nationwide coalition of State Advisory Groups (SAGs) and other juvenile justice professionals. The conference’s theme is *Looking Back, Planning Ahead: A Vision for the Next 40 Years in Juvenile Justice.*

Sessions will focus on policy and practice since the passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) and current issues in the field. See the conference website for more information and to register.

**National Forum on Criminal Justice August 10-12**

The National Criminal Justice Association, the Justice Research and Statistics Association, and the IJIS Institute will hold the National Forum on Criminal Justice August 10 through 12 in Breckenridge, Colorado. Sessions include *Juvenile Justice Reform: A View from the States; Give Me All Your Data, I Want to Improve!; and State and Local Collaboration for Better Decision-Making: Examples from Two Justice-Information Sharing Award Sites,* which highlights the information sharing process during implementation of risk and needs assessment for youth. See the conference website for the agenda, registration, and information about post-conference seminars.

**Featured Resource: NIJ and OJJDP’s Justice Research Series**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) have collaborated on a Justice Research Series, a set of bulletins summarizing research conducted and supported by the two Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs agencies on specific juvenile justice system topics. Below is a description of five recently released topics. Click the titles of each issue to access each issue online.

- **Delays in Youth Justice** (February 2014): Provides findings from a national study of trends in case processing time for juvenile offenders, as well as an in-depth study of three successful jurisdictions’ strategies to reduce delays.

- **Young Offenders: What Happens and What Should Happen** (February 2014): Examines some of the issues surrounding youth and young adults being transferred to adult court, including recidivism, reentry, and adolescent development.

- **Criminal Career Patterns** (May 2014): Describes the relationship between juvenile and adult offending, including severity, frequency, and offense type.
• **Explanations for Offending** (May 2014): Presents a brief summary of five major perspectives on causes of offending and desistance, including social-psychological and life course development theories.

• **Prediction and Risk/Needs Assessment** (May 2014): Defines risk, needs, and protective factors, as well as different methods of assessing these factors and the implications of research findings about the predictive ability of these assessments.

**Evaluation Feature:**
**Ohio’s Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative (BHJJ)**

The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western University recently released an extensive evaluation of a program designed to expand and improve mental health services for juvenile offenders. As we have discussed in past editions of the Bulletin, an extensive amount of program data is needed to extend performance measurement into a full-scale evaluation—to demonstrate that program activities actually caused changes in youth behavior. Completed evaluations of similar programs are a good source of information for program staff to learn more about the data types and collection methods they will need to be prepared for an evaluation.

The Ohio Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiative is a diversion program for 10 to 18 year old system-involved youth diagnosed with mental and behavioral problems such as Bipolar Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Conduct Disorder. The BHJJ program operates in six Ohio counties with funding from the state’s Department of Youth Services and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

The program evaluation found that youth served by BHJJ had substantial improvements with regard to problem behaviors, functioning, and the effects of trauma. The report includes assessments of other important factors for treatment professionals and service providers to consider as they collect program data that demonstrate program successes and provide context for others interested in replicating the program or a similar initiative:

• **Population characteristics.** The average number of mental or behavioral diagnoses for youth involved in the program was more than two, and more than one-third of the youth also used controlled substances.

• **Treatment completion.** More than 70 percent of youth successfully completed the program. “Successful completion” criteria included attendance and compliance, and specific definitions were included for each county.

• **Client satisfaction.** More than 90 percent of the parents, guardians, or other caregivers for youth involved in the program reported that they were satisfied with the delivery of services.

The report provides a description of numerous data collection instruments completed by program staff, youth, and their caregivers, as well as the time each was completed (for example: at intake, during the course of the program, or at the time of
discharge from the program).

The evaluation report also explains the implementation process for each county, including partnerships between local social service agencies and county-specific admission criteria. This information is important because it captures additional nuances for each program site that might be important for program replication, or for understanding differences in treatment outcomes across sites.


Local Spotlight: Memphis, Tennessee

The Shelby County Schools system implemented the School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE) in 2007. SHAPE is designed to reduce referrals to juvenile court by allowing youth to complete a six-week diversion program.

A report on the program, School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE): 2011-2012 Outcome and Evaluation Study details the criteria for SHAPE participation, which include pending juvenile charges for non-serious offenses, willingness to participate in the program, and no past or present felony or serious violent charges or convictions. The program follows a specific curriculum administered by trained Shelby County Schools staff. The program emphasizes accountability and incorporates the Mendez Foundation Curriculum. The school system’s partnership and collaboration with the Memphis Police Department (MPD) has been a critical component, as 95 percent of SHAPE participants are referred by the MPD.

Data collection instruments utilized by program staff include an intake form, agreement to participate, and a risk/needs assessment, program attendance records, and school performance indicators including attendance and grades. Successful completion is defined as attending at least 12 sessions over the six-week program period and meeting additional participation requirements.

Since 2007, the number of referrals to juvenile court from schools participating in SHAPE has declined from about 1,000 to less than 500, though the author notes other programs may have been a factor in this reduction.


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