Implementing Risk Assessment & Measuring Outcomes in Juvenile Justice

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Webinar Objectives

• Provide an overview of key concepts in evidence-based risk assessment tools;
• Discuss the steps Louisiana took to implement an evidence-based risk assessment tool; and
• Explore how data from risk assessment tools can be used to inform practice and policy.
Presenter

Gina M. Vincent, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Law & Psychiatry Program
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Research Evidence: Guiding Principles

– Punitive sanctions do not have a significant effect on re-offending (Gatti et al., 2009).

– Severity of a youth’s offense is not significantly related to the future pattern of offending (Mulvey et al., 2010).

– Confinement has diminishing returns after 6 months (Pathways to Desistance Study)
– Most low-risk youth are unlikely to re-offend even if there is no intervention (Lipsey, 2009). But mixing them with high risk youth may make them worse.

– When services are matched to youth’s level of risk and their “delinquency-producing” (criminogenic) needs, the lower the chance of offending.

– GOAL: Individualized case planning
Cost/Benefit Research

• Benefits per $1.00 spent on the following services, you save:
  – Functional Family Therapy: $28.34
  – Multisystemic Family Therapy: $28.81
  – Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care: $43.70
  – Adolescent Diversion Project: $24.92
  – Juvenile Boot Camps: $0.81
  – Scared Straight: -$477.75 (NET LOSS)
Effective and individualized case management requires valid assessment + Risk-Need-Responsivity principles

- **Risk** – Match the intensity of the intervention with one’s level of risk for re-offending

- **Need** – Target dynamic or changeable risk factors (aka *criminogenic needs*)

- **Responsivity** – Match the mode & strategies of services with the individual
Importance of Matching Services (Vieira et al., 2009)

Match based on # of services given in response to a youth’s criminogenic needs
Benefits Demonstrated from the Risk/Needs Assessment in Juvenile Probation Implementation Study

(Vincent, Guy, et al., 2012; funded by MacArthur Foundation)

- Significant reduction in use of more serious dispositions
- Significant reduction in out-of-home placement rates
- Greater use of lower levels of supervision
- Reallocation of services according to risk level
- No increase in reoffending rates
Three Components are Necessary for These Positive Changes to Occur

1. The risk assessment instrument must be valid and comprehensive for dispositional planning
2. The instrument must be paired with a valid case management practice (e.g., RNR)
3. Quality implementation with data gathering is essential
The Risk Assessment Instrument Must Be Valid & Should Have Certain Characteristics For Dispositional Planning

• Manual describing standardized administration

• Developed for, or validated on, the juvenile justice youth from the right setting

• Based on youth development & delinquency research
The Risk Assessment Instrument (cont.)

- Evidence that it can it be rated consistently (reliability), preferably from independent parties

- Evidence that it measures what it says it does – meaning it predicts reoffending (validity), preferably from independent parties

- Capable of Measuring Change
Elements of Risk/Needs Assessment

Static Risk Factors

Dynamic Risk Factors (criminogenic needs)

Protective or Responsivity Factors

Well-Being or Non-Criminogenic Needs

Enables reassessment of risk level to measure change
Quality Implementation is Crucial

8 Steps to Implementation

1. Getting ready
2. Establish buy-in
3. Select tool
4. Develop policies
5. Training
6. Pilot test
7. Full implementation
8. Sustainability

Vincent, Grisso, & Guy (2012) Funded by MacArthur Foundation
Presenter

Kelly Clement
Regional Manager, New Orleans Region
Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice
Louisiana’s Implementation
1. Getting Ready

• OJJ recognized the need for an assessment tool:
  – As a next step in continuation of reform.
  – To identify needs of youth in order to provide effective treatment.
  – To target agency resources appropriately.

• Awarded Models for Change grant to include assistance from NYSAP in selection of assessment tool.
2. Assessment Tool Selection

Priorities Identified:

- Evidence-based
- Can be administered by non-clinicians
- Risk/need factors that would guide interventions/ treatment planning
- Dynamic factors that could be used for re-assessment and be able to measure youth’s progress
- Cost effective
Selection Process

• Presentation by Dr. Vincent on recommendations for post-adjudication/pre-disposition decision making.
• Decision makers from OJJ as well as local probation departments were involved
• Four of the leading assessment tools were reviewed.
Structured Professional Judgment Tool

24 Risk Items:
- 10 Static
- 14 Dynamic
+ 6 Protective Items
SAVRY

• Decided the decision-point for use
• Being used by local probation as well as OJJ.
• Assessments/reassessments being administered to youth:
  – On probation (11 Regional Offices)
  – In non-secure out-of home placements
  – In secure placement (3 facilities)
3. Establish Buy-In

- Who should you target:
  - Administration
  - Staff
  - Judges
  - District Attorneys
  - Youth Attorneys
  - Stakeholders
How to get Staff Buy-In

• Provide an Initial **Orientation Training** about the assessment tool and its use. What’s in it for me?
  ➤ How will this make me more effective and efficient?
  ➤ How will this benefit the youth we serve?
  ➤ What other forms/documents will this replace?
  ➤ Have respected co-workers provide training.
  ➤ Explain how the assessment will drive decision making.
  ➤ Encourage input (allow staff to submit ideas)
4. Developing Policy

- Determine which policies will be affected
- Determine what new policies are needed
  - Input from “Master” trainers and others.
  - Administration should approve all policies.
  - All policies should remain in draft form until they have been in practice for a period of time.
  - All staff should have the opportunity to give on-going feedback on policies.
5. Training

Started with Four Pilot Regions in Probation

- Initial Orientation training – November 2008
- Master Trainers training on SAVRY & case planning – February 2009
- Field Officers training on SAVRY & case planning – May 2009
6. Implementation in Pilot Sites

Implementation in Pilot Regions – June 2009
7. Statewide Implementation

Implemented in Non-pilot Regions in Probation

- Master trainers trained field officers in remaining regions
- Started with assessing existing cases then new cases

Implemented in three secure custody facilities

- Goal: To improve the continuity of care; a single assessment and case plan will follow each youth
From Assessment to Case Planning

- Youth/Parent Interview (PDI/Social)
- Assessment
- Service Plan
- Matrix
- Referrals
Recommendations to the Court

• Reports to the court should provide...
  – A narrative social history covering content related to the youth’s risk and criminogenic need factors
  – A determination of risk level to factor into disposition and service intensity recommendations
  – Enough detail to support service/program recommendations
    • This should be based on criminogenic needs
Service Plan

- Service Plan/Case Plan directly relates to the results of the risk/needs assessment
- Develop goals based on the identified risk/needs of the client
- Require re-assessments (approx every 6 mths)
  - Incorporate new information into service plan.
- Regular monitoring and updating when youth experiences major changes
Potential Barriers

• Judges do not and cannot always make decisions based on the assessment recommendations

• Person completing the tool has preconceived notions

• Time it takes to complete the assessment

• Decisions made solely on the basis of risk/needs without considering other information, such as:
  – Psychological/psychiatric evaluations, living conditions
8. Data Reporting & Quality Assurance
Data Collection

• Discussion regarding data collection should begin during the planning stages of assessment implementation.

• It is important to include people from the IT Department & the quality assurance department
Data Reporting

• Quality Assurance:
  ➢ Any POs routinely rating youth higher/lower than norm?
  ➢ Inter-rater reliability

• Describe population – allocate resources
  ➢ Risk levels
  ➢ Prominent need areas

• Evaluation of use of the assessment in decision-making
  ➢ Are youth receiving services that match their needs?
  ➢ Are placement decisions commensurate with risk?
  ➢ Are programs successful?
LOUISIANA DATA
Statewide Initial SAVRY Ratings 2014
(includes probation and custody)
Initial SAVRY Risk Rating
By Region

- Alexandria: 60.9 (low: 26.8, med: 41.3, high: 12.2)
- Baton Rouge: 50 (low: 27, med: 34.4, high: 9.8)
- Hammond: 44 (low: 55.7, med: 9.8, high: 9.8)
- Lafayette: 41.9 (low: 32.6, med: 13.9, high: 6.4)
- Lake Charles: 41.3 (low: 26, med: 24.7, high: 8.8)
- Monroe: 35.2 (low: 30.1, med: 7.1, high: 8.8)
- Natchitoches: 47.1 (low: 29.8, med: 16.6, high: 10.5)
- New Orleans: 47.7 (low: 35.5, med: 8.8, high: 3.4)
- Shreveport: 47.8 (low: 19.3, med: 20, high: 17.8)
- Tallulah: 30.6 (low: 35.1, med: 4.2, high: 0.3)
- Thibodaux: 47.8 (low: 30.6, med: 17.8, high: 9.6)
- Statewide: 47.8 (low: 30.6, med: 17.8, high: 9.6)
Initial SAVRY Rating 2014

Need Areas
Use of Risk in Placement Decisions

Current Population Location [Feb 2015] by Low SAVRY Summary
Risk Rating for Violence (Most Recent)

- Secure/Detention/Jail: 7%
- Foster/Group Home/Residential: 7%
- Home/Guardian: 84%
- Out of State/Private Psych/Other Agency: 2%
Use of Risk in Placement Decisions

Current Population Location [Feb 2015] by High SAVRY Summary
Risk Rating for Violence (Most Recent)

- Secure/Detention/Jail: 52%
- Foster/Group Home/Residential: 12%
- Home/Guardian: 33%
- Out of State/Private Psych/Other Agency: 3%
Current Secure Population [Feb 2015] by their Initial SAVRY Summary Risk Rating for Violence

- **Low**: 10%
- **Moderate**: 47%
- **High**: 43%
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MACARTHUR MODELS FOR CHANGE RESOURCE CENTER PARTNERSHIPS

NCHMHJJ Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Collaborative for Change  http://cfc.ncmhjj.com/

RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice  
http://www.rfknrcjj.org/