

## Systems of Care, Behavioral Health and Juvenile Justice: Multiple Perspectives

Guests: Gabriella Celeste, Policy Director, Schubert Center for Child Studies, CWRU; Michael Fox, Integrated Co-occurring Treatment Trainer/Consultant, Center for Innovative Practices/Begun Center, CWRU; Jeff Kretschmar, Research Associate Professor, Begun Center, CWRU; Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio, Summit County Juvenile Court

### Three Key Research Facts about Kids Involved in the Juvenile Justice System: **The 30,000-Foot View**

- About 70% of youth involved in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder of some kind, many with multiple diagnoses, including substance abuse disorders.
- According to more recent data, about 75% of youth involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced traumatic victimization, a significant factor that our systems are just beginning to grapple with in new ways in both policy and practice
- Youth in juvenile placement have nearly three times the risk for suicide as youth in the general population.



### **Who are the kids involved in the juvenile justice system according to the BHJJ data?**

The young people in the BHJJ data are kids who are experiencing significant trauma and violence exposure as well as significant mental health and substance abuse challenges, all of which complicates their care. In addition:

- 15-18% of BHJJ kids have experienced physical abuse
- 15% have experienced sexual abuse
- Over 50% have been exposed to domestic violence
- 40% have both mental health and substance use challenges
- Most have approximately 2 ½ diagnosed/diagnosable mental health and substance abuse challenges

**What happens when these kids come before Summit County Juvenile Court Judge Linda Teodosio?** The system may not initially be aware of the mental health, substance abuse, or trauma in a youth offender's past, so assessments and screenings become the key initial component to determine what their behavioral health needs are so they can be addressed.

**Used to be:** "Juvenile justice system was a place where people looked for children to be locked up and teach them a lesson, to get them on the right path.

**Now:** "We know that if a child is dealing with a chemical dependency, a significant mental health disorder or has suffered significant trauma, simply placing them in detention certainly isn't going to 'correct' their behavior, as a matter of fact, with certain types of trauma and mental health disorders, placement in a confined space with other youth will actually aggravate and make their mental health disorder worse."

### **Mental Health Behavior Treatment = Reduced Criminal Outcomes**

Referring for assessment – Determining the best methods to deliver them mental health services – Helping get them on the right path.

“Kids with behavioral health needs have a tougher time correcting their behavior if their mental health and chemical dependency needs aren’t met. And those are the kids who penetrate the system deeper. –

“**The earlier we can identify those kids and connect them to services** the less likely it is that they’re going to end up in the deep-end of the system.” – Judge Linda Teodosio

### **Important Key to Effective Community Treatment for Youth Offenders**

Partnerships between courts, social service agencies, schools, and families, all working together to identify red flag and early indicators of relapse or struggle.

### **From the Clinicians’ Perspective**

From the perspective of dealing with co-occurring disorders, substance abuse disorders, and kids involved in the juvenile justice system, what are the key ingredients? What works? What needs to work?

- Need to perform – and get used to performing – more comprehensive screenings, a broad level comprehensive, integrated, trauma assessments.
- Major family involvement

### **Home-based Treatment Is More Effective**

Intensive Home-Based Treatment (IHBT) has proven to be a good treatment match for higher-level needs youth who are identified by the courts and school systems.

Similarly, kids involved in the BHJJ initiative have shown very encouraging outcomes including improved behavioral health, mental health and physical health along with reductions in substance use, trauma symptoms, school absences, and school expulsions. Plus, grades improve. These kids often do not reappear in juvenile court.

### **REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF KIDS IN JUVENILE PRISONS:**

Only about 3 ½ of the kids who participated in BHJJ end up, at any time, in prison in Ohio.

### **The Arc of Systems Change**

Integrating Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment and Trauma in Juvenile Justice – Leadership, culture shift, systems investments.

- 10 years ago, **Ohio incarcerated over 1500 kids in a given year**; we are **now regularly down to 500** and have been for the past three years. – 2017 around 450
- Recognizing the need for treatment for behavioral health issues, 100% of the girls on the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) case load in 2017 were receiving mental health services. (Over 50% of our boys were as well.)
- Ohio has become one of the first states in the nation that **no longer puts girls in state facilities**.

**Lowering of the incarceration population is a big trend and an important issue.**

Number of institutions in the state has gone from 5 prisons in 2009 to three in 2018; going back some 20-25 years ago, there were approximately a dozen.

**Alternative to State Facilities – Community Correctional Facilities** Close to family for family involvement and support.

“This has all happened in the context, both nationally and locally in Ohio, of reduced arrests for juveniles. – It’s not as if we’ve seen the crime rate go up while these incarceration numbers have come down...” – Gabrielle Celeste, the Shubert Center for Youth Studies

“There has been a cultural shift to move away from what was becoming an ‘adultified’ kind of system for kids in those facilities. The state, judges, and local partners have really adopted this understanding of what works with these young people, what works developmentally with where they’re at, both in terms of their brain development but also peers, family, the importance of context in the environment – Taking a more youth-focused, developmentally-informed approach have led to some of these important investments.” – Gabrielle Celeste

***BIG CHALLENGE: SUSTAINING THIS...***

Sustainability of the interventions, sustain progress, maintain momentum.

**Importance of Evaluation**

Jeff Kretschmar : “Solid research and evaluation provides counties involved in these community- and treatment-based initiatives with objective, evidence-based evaluations to illustrate what is working and how investments are paying off.”

***“Data is so important to the courts. Community safety is primary. And I have to answer to funders, to the community, to the voters. And the way I am able to do that is to point to the kind of numbers that evaluation provides. – The reduction in recidivism. That they’re improving in school.” - Judge Linda Teodosio***

**Developments of Learning Communities**

Groups of clinicians and organizations in the field comparing notes and experience, looking at data together, talking about practices that various counties are trying, building on the sense of willingness to share and try new things.

**Effectiveness and Treatment**

“I think we need the presumption of trauma for any kid who enters the system. We’d be better off treating everybody with a trauma-informed care perspective.” – Gabrielle Celeste

To more effectively implement interventions and treatment keep in mind to:

- Develop and/or identify strategies for keeping kids with their families and in their communities and getting them on the right path again.
- Treatment/interventions need to be developmentally appropriate and matched correctly to where it should be, keeping in mind that youth offenders aren’t ‘little adults’. For example, 12

step-programs might not be the right match for youth who are still developing cognitively, emotionally, etc.

- Maintain open community partnership (Ohio has been exceptional at doing so.) The Wraparound System of Care links the community approach and high-fidelity wraparound behavioral and social services with one clinician tracking process and progress and balances and informs stakeholders. The systems approach decreases kids getting lost while navigating recovery.

Many interventions can work if you have the systems approach, where people maintain contact with each other, different systems maintain contact with each other (the courts, the schools, child welfare) and the clients, families, and schools are at the core of this conversation.

### **Community and Home Treatment Cost Savings**

In addition to the lives saved or changed, there are significant cost savings to state and local governments with in-home and community treatment interventions. The cost of incarcerating a **young person in a state facility is \$530 a day**. In a **community correction facility, it's \$265 per day**.

The BHJJ talks about the cost benefit of these programs.

- Cost of community treatment, in-home treatment, and community correctional facilities, between \$7,000-\$10,000 for treatment over the course of a year □ Cost of incarceration: \$530 a day, some \$193,450 a year.
- The need for transparency of data for the public for awareness and advocacy

***“The data illustrates how actually doing the right type of treatment and the right dosage – often for less money – results in the kind of outcomes everyone is seeking.” – Jeff Kretschmar***

### **TAKEAWAYS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

- The courts, schools, social service agencies and the interventions and treatments need to evolve as the needs of youth evolve.
- There is a growing need for trauma informed care in approaching youth recovery and rehabilitation, especially awareness of the proportion of trauma experienced is raised.
- There is a continuing need to better understand how diagnosis and trauma and the histories of abuse that many of these kids are dealing with impacts their treatment and how certain treatments may be more impactful than others.
- Similarly, there is a need to better understand the long-term impact of involvement in programs like BHJJ, which reduces the likelihood that a youth offender will end up in the adult prison system.
- Finally, it is of significant importance that we pay more attention to the relationship between culture and treatment effectiveness, identifying the cultural needs to be taken into consideration when understanding how a child and family may interact with a treatment provider. Considering the disproportionate minority contact with the courts, enhanced cultural competency is crucial.