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Study: Ohio Diversion Program Decreases Delinquency

By: **GARY GATELY** | 2 HOURS AGO

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Here's more evidence that treatment is often more effective than incarceration for young offenders.

BENJAMIN CHAMBERS ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE RESOURCE HUB



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Most offenders ages 10 to 18 with mental health and behavioral problems who were diverted from detention centers to a treatment program in Ohio over an eight-year period showed decreases in future delinquency, a study shows.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland studied 2,545 offenders who were enrolled in Ohio's Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice initiative, operating in 11 counties between 2006 and 2013.

Many of the offenders had also abused drugs and alcohol, had a history of violent or criminal behavior and had had encounters with county agencies before appearing in juvenile court.

The youths were diverted from detention centers to community-based agencies for treatment of mental health issues, drug problems or both. Offenders benefited from such treatment, which may not be available in detention centers. They also showed improvements in functioning and a reduction in symptoms related to trauma.

Assessments at community agencies showed nearly 60 percent of the youths suffered from a mental health disorder, and 38 percent had been diagnosed with both a mental health disorder and a substance abuse disorder.

Many of the youths were screened for behavioral health problems for the first time when they

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encountered the juvenile justice system, said Jeff M. Kretschmar, a research assistant professor from the Begun Center and the lead author of the study, in a news release.

The study, which appeared online in the Criminal Justice Policy Review, said that of the youths focused on:

- Suicide attempts were reported by 15 percent, and another 40 percent talked about suicide.
- About a third had been charged with a felony in the 12 months before their enrollment in the program.
- Physical abuse was reported by 18 percent, sexual abuse by nearly 16 percent and exposure to domestic violence by 41 percent.
- Nearly 70 percent had a family history of a mental health disorder, and 61 percent reported a family history of substance abuse.

The study found that youths who started using alcohol and drugs before age 12 and were using when they began the program were less likely to successfully complete treatment. And youths diagnosed with both a mental health and substance abuse disorder were less likely to complete treatment successfully.

The program began 15 years ago at the request of Ohio juvenile court judges with help from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

Youth of Color



RECENT STORIES ABOUT JUVENILE DEFENSE

Easing Drug Laws the Answer to the Nation's Drug, Prison Problem – Or Precursor to More Crime?



Many drug laws have punishment lengths that do not fit the crime, some experts are saying.

Youth Facing Adult Jail Time now Excels in Alternative Program



Although Daryl was only 15 years old at the time of his arrest, he was charged and tried as an adult.

Case Western Reserve researchers at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences' Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education analyzed information from caregivers, social workers and the young offenders.



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MacArthur Foundation Urges Major Changes in Juvenile Justice System



Solitary confinement of juveniles should be banned, and children should be exempt from sex offender registry requirements, according to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The influential,

Chicago-based philanthropy behind the ambitious "Models for Change" juvenile justice reform effort also called for sharp restrictions on prosecution of youths in the adult criminal justice system and strengthening of the confidentiality of juvenile records. The recommendations are in a new report, "Because Kids are Different: Five Opportunities for Reforming the Juvenile Justice System."

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Expungement App Tries to Help Erase Minors' Records



A foundation has released an app aimed at encouraging more juveniles to seek assistance expunging their arrest and court records.

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Youth of Color and the Juvenile Justice System Racial-Ethnic Fairness

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Treating mental health, substance abuse problems slashes future juvenile offenses, study finds:

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Cops Smash Boy Through Window in the Bronx

UPDATE: 'Prominent Lawyer Takes Case of Bronx Boy Allegedly Pushed Through Window by Police' NEW YORK

— The 14-year-old boy sat on the stoop of Hookah Stop in the Bronx, blood pouring from his chest and filling his lungs, and thought: This is what it's like to die. Moments before 11 o'clock Saturday night, the boy, Javier Payne, had been smashed through the store's plate glass window by a police officer who had stopped him after an altercation with a man on the street, witnesses said.



Trafficked Boys Overlooked

From The Chicago Bureau: For years, the sex trade was "their" problem, a heinous part of culture in poorer nations. But attention here to sex trafficking has slowly increased in recent years with the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act and other federal state laws.

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