

Executive Summary: An Evaluation of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative: 2006-2015 Montgomery County Results

Fred Butcher, PhD | Krystal Tossone, PhD | Jeff M. Kretschmar, PhD



JACK, JOSEPH AND MORTON MANDEL
SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES
CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY

Begun Center for
Violence Prevention
Research and Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AN EVALUATION OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/JUVENILE JUSTICE (BHJJ) INITIATIVE: 2006 – 2015 MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESULTS

Fred Butcher, Ph.D., Krystel Tossone, Ph.D., & Jeff M. Kretschmar, Ph.D.

Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education
Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences
Case Western Reserve University

Juvenile justice-involved youth with serious behavioral health issues often have inadequate and limited access to care to address their complex and multiple needs. Ohio's Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiative was intended to transform and expand the local systems' options to better serve these youth. Recent emphasis was placed on decreasing the population of ODYS facilities while providing alternatives to incarceration. Twelve counties participated in BHJJ in the newest biennium: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Lucas, Summit, Wayne, Holmes, Trumbull, Mahoning, Lorain, and Wood. BHJJ was funded by a partnership between the Ohio Departments of Youth Services (ODYS) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University provided research and evaluation services for the program.

The BHJJ program diverts youth from local and state detention centers into more comprehensive, community-based mental and behavioral health treatment. The BHJJ program enrolled juvenile justice-involved youth between 10-18 years of age who met several of the following criteria: a DSM IV Axis I diagnosis, substantial mental status impairment, a co-occurring substance use/abuse problem, a pattern of violent or criminal behavior, and a history of multi-system involvement.

Demographics and Youth Characteristics

- ❖ 1,410 youth have been enrolled in BHJJ (52.1% males, 49.5% Caucasian). In the past two years, youth enrolled in Montgomery County were comprised of more males (60.8%) than females (39.2%) and more non-whites (51.3%) than whites (48.7%).
- ❖ Youth averaged 2.5 Axis I diagnoses. Females were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with Alcohol-related Disorders, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and Depressive Disorders. Males were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with Cannabis Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Conduct Disorder.
- ❖ Over 40% of males and 32% of females were diagnosed with both a mental health and substance use diagnosis.
- ❖ Caregivers reported that 25% of the females had a history of sexual abuse, over 48% talked about suicide, and over 23% had attempted suicide. Over 65% of males and 69% of females had family members who were diagnosed with or showed signs of depression.
- ❖ According to the OYAS, 56.6% of the youth served in Montgomery County were either moderate or high risk.

- ❖ Of the youth enrolled in Montgomery County, 22.7% had a felony charge in the 12 months prior to enrollment.

Educational Information

- ❖ Nearly 66% of the youth were suspended or expelled from school in the year prior to their enrollment. At termination, 86.5% of youth were attending school. At termination, 27.2% of successful completers and 9.2% of unsuccessful completers received mostly A's and B's.
- ❖ At termination, workers reported that 90.8% of youth were attending school more or about the same amount as they were before starting treatment.

Mental/Behavioral Health Outcomes

- ❖ BHJJ youth reported a significant decrease in trauma symptoms from intake to termination.
- ❖ Results from the Ohio Scales indicated the caregiver, worker, and youth all reported increased youth functioning and decreased problem severity while in BHJJ treatment.
- ❖ Both males and females reported decreased six month and 30 day substance use with respect to most of the commonly used substances, including alcohol and marijuana.
- ❖ There was a 44% reduction in risk for out of home placement from intake to termination. About six percent of successful completers and 57% of unsuccessful completers were at risk for out of home placement at termination.
- ❖ Over 95% of caregivers agreed that they were satisfied with the services their child received through BHJJ and 97.4% agreed that the services received were culturally and ethnically sensitive.

Termination and Recidivism Information

- ❖ Over 60% (60.8%) of the youth terminated from the BHJJ program were identified locally as successful treatment completers. Over 57% (57.1%) of youth enrolled in the past biennium were identified as successful treatment completers. The average length of stay in the program was approximately 5 months (5.2 months for youth enrolled during previous biennium).
- ❖ Successful treatment completion in BHJJ produced lower percentages of subsequent delinquent adjudications than unsuccessful completion, although both groups demonstrated decreased juvenile court involvement after termination from BHJJ compared to before enrollment.
- ❖ One year after termination, 15.6% of successful treatment completers and 22.6% of unsuccessful treatment completers had a new felony charge. Of the youth entering BHJJ with at least one felony charge, 30.2% were charged with a new felony in the 12 months following BHJJ termination.
- ❖ Twenty-five of the 1392 youth (1.8%) enrolled in BHJJ for whom we had recidivism data were sent to an ODYS facility at any time following their enrollment in BHJJ.