

Executive Summary: An Evaluation of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative: 2013-2015 Holmes County Results

Fred Butcher, PhD | Krystel 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: 2013–2015 HOLMES 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

- ❖ In Holmes County, 11 youth have been enrolled in BHJJ (81.8% males, 81.8% Caucasian). The average age at intake was about 15 years.
- ❖ Youth averaged 1.4 Axis I diagnoses. One-hundred percent were diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder.
- ❖ Caregivers reported that 100% of the females ran away and over 50% talked about suicide. Over 77% of males and 50% of females had family members who were diagnosed with or showed signs of depression.
- ❖ According to the OYAS, 70% of the youth served in Holmes County were either moderate or high risk.
- ❖ Of the youth enrolled in Holmes County, 11% had a felony charge in the 12 months prior to enrollment.

Educational Information

- ❖ Over 27% of the youth were suspended or expelled from school in the year prior to their enrollment. At termination, 71% of youth were attending school. At intake, 27.3% of youth

were receiving mostly D's and F's in school, and at termination, 0 were receiving D's and F's in school.

- ❖ At termination, workers reported that 77.7% of youth were attending school more or about the same amount as they were before starting treatment.

Mental/Behavioral Health Outcomes

- ❖ Results from the Ohio Scales indicated the caregiver, worker, and youth all reported decreased problem severity from BHJJ intake to termination.
- ❖ Youth demonstrated a decrease in trauma symptoms from intake to termination.
- ❖ Youth reported decreased six month alcohol and marijuana use.
- ❖ Upon intake, 33.3% of youth were at risk for out of home placement, and 0% of youth were at risk for out of home placement at termination.
- ❖ One-hundred percent of caregivers agreed that they were satisfied with the services their child received through BHJJ and that the services received were culturally and ethnically sensitive.

Termination and Recidivism Information

- ❖ One-hundred percent of the youth terminated from the BHJJ program were identified locally as successful treatment completers. The average length of stay in the program was approximately 5 months.
- ❖ Youth demonstrated decreased juvenile court involvement 12 months after termination from BHJJ compared to before enrollment.
- ❖ One year after termination, 16.7% of completers had a new felony charge. Of the youth entering BHJJ with at least one felony charge, none were charged with a new felony in the 12 months following BHJJ termination.
- ❖ None of the 9 youth enrolled in BHJJ for whom we had recidivism data were sent to an ODYS facility at any time following their enrollment in BHJJ.