

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

Lorain County Results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AN EVALUATION OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/JUVENILE JUSTICE (BHJJ) INITIATIVE: 2013–2015 LORAIN COUNTY RESULTS

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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 Lorain County, 35 youth have been enrolled in BHJJ (68.6% male, 45.7% Caucasian). The average age at intake was 16.6 years old.
- ❖ Youth averaged 2.9 Axis I diagnoses. Females were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- ❖ One-hundred percent of males and females were diagnosed with both a mental health and substance use diagnosis.
- ❖ Caregivers reported that 33.3% of the females had a history of sexual abuse, over 72% talked about suicide, and over 45% had attempted suicide. Over 69% of males and 63% of females had family members who were diagnosed with or showed signs of depression.
- ❖ According to the OYAS, 73.5% of the youth served in Lorain County were either moderate or high risk.
- ❖ Of the youth enrolled in Lorain County, 22.9% had a felony charge in the 12 months prior to enrollment.

Educational Information

- ❖ Nearly 43% of the youth were suspended or expelled from school in the year prior to their enrollment. At termination, 68.4% of youth were attending school. At termination, 57.2% of successful completers and 20% of unsuccessful completers received mostly A's, B's, and C's.
- ❖ At termination, workers reported that 94.4% 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 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.
- ❖ Youth reported decreased 6 month marijuana use from intake to termination.
- ❖ Over 12% of successful completers and 72% of unsuccessful completers were at risk for out of home placement at termination.
- ❖ Eighty-five percent of caregivers agreed that they were satisfied with the services their child received through BHJJ and 90.5% agreed that the services received were culturally and ethnically sensitive.

Termination and Recidivism Information

- ❖ Thirty-six 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.
- ❖ One year after termination, zero youth had a new felony charge.
- ❖ None of the 32 youth enrolled in BHJJ for whom we had recidivism data were sent to an ODYS facility at any time following their enrollment in BHJJ.