
CONSENSUS PROJECT NEWSLETTER AUGUST 31, 2012

States Take Steps to Reduce the Prosecution of Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System

By Roger Ghatt, Campaign for Youth Justice

A national [survey](#) released recently by GBA Strategies reveals that the majority of Americans support youth justice system reform. The study, which surveyed 1,000 adults from across the nation, shows that the public would support juvenile justice reform efforts that focus on rigorous rehabilitation over incarceration and against placing youth in adult jails and prisons.

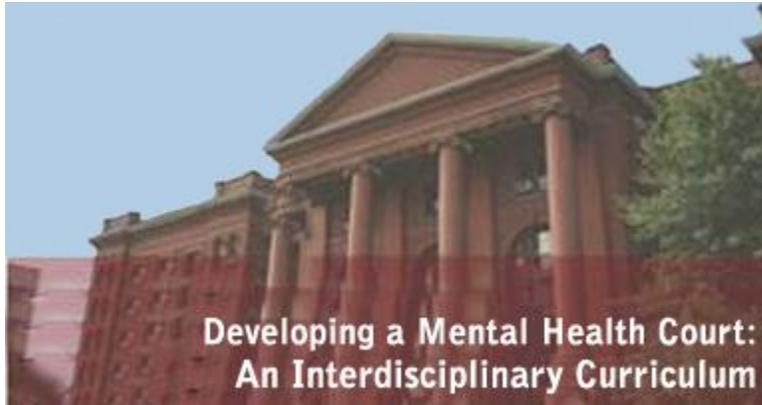
Highlights of the survey include:

- The public strongly favors rehabilitation and treatment approaches, such as counseling, education, treatment, restitution, and community service (89 percent).
- The public rejects placement of youth in adult jails and prisons (69 percent).
- Americans strongly favor involving the youth's families in treatment (86 percent), keeping youth close to home (77 percent), and ensuring that youth are connected with their families (86 percent).
- The public strongly favors individualized determinations on a case-by-case basis by juvenile court judges in the juvenile justice system over automatic prosecution in adult criminal court (76 percent).
- Americans support requiring the juvenile justice system to reduce racial and ethnic disparities (66 percent).

These results are consistent with U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studies that have concluded that juvenile transfer laws—which allow state courts to move youth to the adult system for trying and sentencing—are ineffective at deterring crime and reducing recidivism.

To continue reading this feature, click [here](#).

BJA and CSG Justice Center to Release Online Multimedia Mental Health Court Curriculum



In **Fall 2012** the CSG Justice Center, with funding support from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, will release *Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum*, which will be available on the [Justice Center website](#). Containing online presentations and group activities, this **free multimedia curriculum is the first single resource with**

the information teams need to plan, implement, and sustain a mental health court. Based on research and best practices from the field, the curriculum also introduces key concepts in criminal justice and behavioral health and includes materials that will help determine if a mental health court is appropriate for your jurisdiction, and how such courts can be managed and sustained. Organized into freestanding modules, the curriculum can easily be customized based on users’ specific needs and time considerations. *Developing a Mental Health Court* will be an invaluable resource for judges, attorneys, behavioral health treatment providers and administrators, corrections and law enforcement officers, court administrators, judicial educators and many others.

Criminal Justice/Mental Health Learning Sites Survey—Provide Your Feedback Now!

“Learning sites” are programs that are using promising approaches and are committed to ongoing quality improvement and sharing their expertise through peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Since 2006, the CSG Justice Center has worked in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to identify and highlight criminal justice/mental health collaborations from across the country that can serve as learning sites for those interested in mental health courts, as well as in collaborations between law enforcement and mental health agencies (<http://consensusproject.org/learningsites>).

In order to ensure that learning sites meet the needs of the field, the Justice Center is asking criminal justice and mental health practitioners to participate in a brief survey to provide feedback on programs, relevant topics, and peer-to-peer learning strategies. Your responses will inform future learning site programs and offerings.

Please take a few minutes to complete the 10 short questions in this survey by clicking on the following link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BTJG9LF>.

The survey will close at the end of the day on Friday, September 28th. For more information, please contact Lindsey Fry at lfry@csg.org.

Gerard “Jerry” Murphy Joins CSG Justice Center Staff

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is pleased to welcome Gerard “Jerry” Murphy to its staff as deputy director of the National Initiatives division. Jerry brings to his role vast expertise and diverse experience in criminal justice policy and research, organizational management, technical assistance, and education. Based in the New York City office, Jerry will provide guidance and strategic oversight for the four programs within the National Initiatives division: Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Reentry, and Courts.

Prior to joining the CSG Justice Center, Jerry held a number of positions at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a nonprofit, membership organization of law enforcement leaders. In his most recent role, as the director of Homeland Security and Development, he managed and developed a variety of grant-funded projects focusing on research and technical assistance for law enforcement agencies.

To continue reading about Jerry Murphy joining the CSG Justice Center, click [here](#).

Mental Health Courts Survey

While mental health courts (MHCs) are rapidly growing in number, there is limited knowledge about the practices and resources that these courts use to assess participants for admission. The Bronx TASC Mental Health Court Program, in collaboration with the University of New Haven, is asking mental health court clinical professionals to participate in a brief online research survey. The goal of the survey is to increase knowledge about assessment practices in MHCs. Your participation will help policymakers and supporters of MHCs understand the need for increased attention in the area of assessment practices. Just one person from your mental health court needs to complete the survey. Participants are asked to complete the survey by October 17th by clicking on the following <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MHCPSURVEY>

JMHCP Success Story: Treatment Program for Youth Halts Juvenile's Downward Slide

The Council of State Governments Justice Center—which coordinates the Criminal Justice / Mental Health Consensus Project—has been collecting stories that will be published monthly about individuals whose lives have improved as a result of their involvement in a Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC)-funded grant program. If you would like to provide a story about a successful client in your JMHCPC-funded program, please contact [Stephanie Joson](#) of the CSG Justice Center.

This story is about a juvenile enrolled in the Early Project Empower Program in Utah. This program was the recipient of a 2010 JMHCPC Planning and Implementation grant. All names and other individually identifying details have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

Grant Program: Justice and Mental Health Collaboration

Grantee Type: 2010 Expansion

State: Utah

Grantee: Weber Human Services

Program Name: Early Project Empower Program

When he was 17 years old, Nathan took a handful of prescription painkillers one night and stole \$300 from the safe at the restaurant where he worked. When he was arrested, he admitted that he stole the money to buy drugs and he had been trying to take his own life.

Nathan had led a difficult life. He had never met his biological father, who was addicted to heroin and left the family when Nathan was an infant (he died in an attempted burglary two years later). Nathan started experiencing serious depression at age nine and attempted to hang himself in the fourth grade. Two years before his arrest, Nathan's mother, who had alcohol dependence, disappeared—leaving him in the custody of his stepfather, who was himself a recovering alcoholic. Nathan stopped attending school in his sophomore year of high school. He'd been regularly smoking pot and taking ecstasy, OxyContin, and other painkillers since he was 13 and was stealing to support his drug habit.

Since this was his first arrest, Nathan's juvenile court judge sentenced him to seven days detention and to a term of probation, and assigned him \$1,300 in fines. His probation officer referred him to the Early Project Empower Program, an intensive community-based treatment program for youth who have co-occurring disorders and are involved in the juvenile justice system. Within 24 hours of the referral, a therapist met with Nathan while he was still in jail and conducted an assessment that resulted in a referral to a child psychiatrist. After his release from jail, Nathan participated in counseling and twice-weekly cognitive-behavioral therapy for substance abuse, and was placed on an anti-depressant, which he said helped to improve his outlook.

To continue reading this success story, click [here](#).

Publications & Resources

[Trends in Juvenile Justice State Legislation 2001 – 2011](#)

This National Conference of State Legislatures report is a summary analysis of 2001-2011 juvenile justice legislation in all 50 states. The report describes the direction of state juvenile justice policy over this ten-year period, highlights significant pieces of legislation, and catalogs the volume and variety of juvenile justice legislation enacted in the states. To download this report, click [here](#).

["Looking Back to See the Future of Prison Downsizing in America," Dr. Joan Petersilia](#)

Recent declines in U.S. prison populations have caused many reformers to suggest that America's experiment with mass incarceration is ending. However, in this National Institute of Justice Keynote Address delivered June 19th in Arlington, Virginia, Dr. Joan Petersilia warned that current prison downsizing policies may backfire if we fail to heed the lessons learned from the intermediate sanctions movement of the 1990s. To watch this video, click [here](#).

[A Checklist for Implementing Evidence-Based Practices and Programs for Justice-Involved Adults with Behavioral Health Disorders](#)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation and the Council of State Governments Justice Center have prepared this easy-to-use checklist to help behavioral health agencies assess their utilization of evidence-based practices associated with positive public safety and public health outcomes. To download the checklist, click [here](#).

CJ/MH IN THE NEWS

Articles from newspapers around the country covering issues at the intersection of mental health and criminal justice can be found on the Consensus Project website. Some recent headlines are posted below.

[KSWO-TV \(OK\) — New women's drug treatment center opens in Lawton](#)

8/21/12 — This new facility, at the Taliaferro Mental Health Center offers these women treatment over jail.

[The Morning Call \(PA\) — Dealing with mentally ill: Training for cops uneven](#)

8/20/12 — So far, 151 police officers from 28 departments in Bucks — the county has more than 40 police departments — have gone through the 40-hour program, according to Sgt. Andrew Aninsman, a Bensalem Township police officer who serves as the CIT Task Force's co-chairman.

[CNN \(GA\) — Navigating the mentally ill away from jail](#)

8/21/12 — The program is trying to show state leaders the benefits of putting state money into this front end program rather than funding prisons and hospitals—which are much more expensive, according to Nora Haynes who oversees the project for the National Alliance of Mentally Ill, or NAMI.

[The Columbian \(WA\) — County re-examines policies to reduce suicide rate at jail](#)

8/19/12 — Clark County Sheriff Garry Lucas pledged to county commissioners last week that he will take a new approach with mentally ill inmates at the Clark County Jail.

[The Kansas City Star \(MO\) — Police are learning to deal with the mentally ill](#)

8/17/12 — Police in Wyandotte County are following the path of other jurisdictions by looking for more compassionate ways to work with the mentally ill.

[Minnesota Public Radio \(MN\) — Expansion of treatment court sought for outstate Minn. veterans](#)

8/13/12 — Two years after Hennepin County launched a Veterans Treatment Court, more than 100 veterans have avoided jail time and gotten the help they needed.

[The Meridian Star \(PA\) — Training to help law officers handle mental health crises](#)

8/9/12 — County and city law enforcement officers are joining forces with mental health officials to learn how to handle individuals who are facing mental health crises.

[Tuscaloosa News \(AL\) — Tuscaloosa County's mental health court is working](#)

8/9/12 — An experiment intended to keep mentally ill criminal offenders out of jail appears to be working, officials say.

[Cheboygan Daily Tribune \(MI\) — Juvenile mental health court being considered](#)

7/31/12 — After a training and information session was held Wednesday, Cheboygan County Probate Judge Robert Butts hopes to implement a juvenile mental health court.

[The Portland Press Herald \(ME\) — If someone's on the brink, he's there to talk them down](#)

7/31/12 — Rockett is a crisis counselor with Opportunity Alliance, assigned to the Portland Police Department. He responds as needed to South Portland.

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