

Creating an Integrated Continuum of Care for Justice-Involved Youth: How Sacramento County Collaborates Across Systems

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Introduction

California’s juvenile justice system has gone through considerable transformation in the past decade. One of the most notable drivers of change was the 2007 passage of Senate Bill 81, commonly known as the “Juvenile Justice Realignment” bill, which shifted the state’s responsibilities for most system-involved youth to local agencies. This legislation restricted counties’ ability to commit non-serious youthful offenders to state facilities and established a block grant to improve the capacity of county probation systems to provide rehabilitation services to youth (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2011). Inspired by these legal and structural changes, as well as other advancements in the body of knowledge on how to best serve system-involved youth, county-level leaders and advocates across California have launched reform efforts designed to achieve better outcomes for youth, families, staff, and communities.

Sacramento County is an excellent example of a jurisdiction that, in the past ten years, has strived to develop a more collaborative and integrated continuum of care for youth involved in the juvenile justice and related systems of care. This brief highlights several of the exceptional multi-system reform efforts happening in the county, including: the creation of a dedicated court docket, a memorandum of understanding (MOU), and a screening tool to better serve Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC; a diversion program that addresses justice-involved youth’s mental health needs; environmental and programming improvements for youth in secure custody; and the implementation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), a multi-agency initiative created to improve outcomes for youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (referred to as “crossover youth”). These reform efforts, designed to meet the needs of youth involved in multiple systems of care, have been led by a core leadership team consisting of representatives from Sacramento’s Juvenile Court, juvenile probation, child welfare, education, behavioral health, and county counsel, with support from other key partners such as the legal community, including the District Attorney and Public Defender offices, law enforcement, and community-based advocacy organizations and providers.

Efforts of Address Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Issues

It is estimated that up to 360,000 children in the United States are at risk of being commercially sexually exploited each year (Development Services Group, Inc., 2014). Literature suggests that CSEC youth face poor outcomes, including elevated risk for posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse, and sexually transmitted infection (Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Cook, Barnert, Goboian, & Bath, 2016). Furthermore, when CSEC youth become involved in the justice system, the response of law enforcement, courts, and related agencies may not always reflect trauma-informed principles. For example, studies have found that CSEC victims are often inappropriately placed in detention without necessary support services (Bounds, Julion, & Delaney, 2015; Development Services Group, 2014; Liles, Blacker, Landini, & Urquiza, 2016). Similarly, Goodman & Laurence (2014) found that CSEC youth are 28 times more likely to be arrested for prostitution. In California, Alameda County’s Safety Net Program collected and analyzed data on 482 commercially sexually exploited youth in their jurisdiction and found that 84 percent had a juvenile arrest history (Alameda County Office of District Attorney, 2015).



Recognizing that sexual exploitation is a prevalent issue for youth in California, in 2013 the California Child Welfare Council published a report providing an overview and a set of recommendations for working with the CSEC population. These recommendations focused on assessing prevalence, coordinating across multiple systems to identify CSEC youth, providing guidance, protocols, and trainings for professionals who work with the population, and developing policies and services that specifically address the needs of these youth (California Child Welfare Council, 2013). The following year, the California legislature passed legislation that amended the California Welfare and Institutions Code to establish a state-funded CSEC program, which provides funding for counties electing to participate¹.

Building on the momentum generated by the California Child Welfare Council's report and the new statute, the leadership of the Sacramento Juvenile Court subsequently redesigned its court-based response to CSEC cases. With the goal of improving services and outcomes for crossover youth (and crossover CSEC youth in particular) by providing a more treatment-centered, cross-system approach, Sacramento County Probation Department's Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Michael Shores, assembled a team to attend the 2014 Multi-System Integration Certificate Program² (MSI CP) at Georgetown University, a program hosted by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR). In addition to Assistant Chief Shores, this team consisted of the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, Assistant County Counsel, Deputy Director of Child Protective Services, Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Services, and Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Education. As a result of its participation in the MSI CP, the Sacramento team committed itself to both implementing the CJJR CYPM and developing a Capstone Project³ that specifically addressed the need to better identify and serve crossover CSEC youth in their jurisdiction.

First, the team created a unique court docket dedicated to serve CSEC youth up to the age of 21. To support this approach, court staff, probation officers, law enforcement officers, social workers, and service providers were trained in CSEC-related issues, including trauma, risk factors, and effective interventions. Judge Boulware Eurie presides over the CSEC Court one and a half days each week, and a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meets two days before the docket to discuss recommendations and formulate plans regarding service delivery and system responses. The MDT usually includes representatives from the Public Defender's office, District Attorney's office, Probation, Child Protective Services, as well as school personnel, child advocates, therapists from private providers, and professionals from other agencies depending on the youth's needs. This multidisciplinary approach allows communication and collaboration between child-serving agencies and their partners to address the complex needs of CSEC youth.

Before each case hearing, Judge Boulware Eurie meets briefly with the attorneys to learn the most updated information about the youth and discuss any potential issues. In addition to closely monitoring and restricting those entering the courtroom as authorized by law, the judge and the attorneys take a therapeutic, strength-based approach to working with the youth in court. They make an effort to verbally acknowledge each youth's efforts and improvements, however small, and encourage youth to express their feelings, goals, and challenges. When making a decision, the judge explains her reasoning in detail and often asks for the youth's input and response. The CSEC Court not only brings together agencies to

¹ California Welfare and Institutions Code § 16524.7

² The MSI CP is a week-long program designed to train leaders on how to improve outcomes for youth known to child welfare, juvenile justice, and related systems through a multi-disciplinary approach that highlights integration and collaboration. The goal of the program is to bring together current and future leaders and increase their knowledge on multi-system reform, cultivate their leadership skills, improve the operation of their organizations, and further build a network of individuals across the country committed to systems improvement and reform.

³ Upon completion of the Certificate Program, participants become CJJR Fellows by designing and implementing a Capstone Project focused on multi-system reform in their jurisdiction. CJJR currently has over 800 Fellows who benefit from ongoing technical assistance from CJJR and participation in a growing network of mutually supportive leaders across the country.



provide seamless services for youth, but also proactively engages youth and their families in the process to facilitate positive youth development.

To further support this work, the team also created a CSEC Interagency Steering Committee and signed an MOU⁴ delineating each agency's role and responsibility in improving services and outcomes for CSEC youth. The MOU established a new process for identifying CSEC youth and those at risk of being commercially sexually exploited, mandated the reporting of commercial sexual exploitation of youth to Child Protective Services, and developed a MDT structure to work with identified CSEC youth in various capacities. The team also partnered with the WestCoast Children's Clinic to identify common indicators and create a screening instrument, the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT), which facilitates better identification of CSEC youth and youth at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. CSE-IT is currently being piloted at Sacramento's Child Protective Services, Office of Education, Sacramento Unified School District, County Public Health Nursing, and Probation Department, including the County's Youth Detention Facility (YDF).

The team's Capstone Project also addressed the inefficiency of communicating youth's educational progress between agencies. In 2015, the Sacramento County Office of Education hired a transition specialist who collaborates with legal counsel to ensure that the MDT members receive youth's comprehensive educational histories. The Office of Education also developed a new transcript request system for CSEC youth attending schools within the YDF. When youth are released from custody, they receive a folder with copies of their transcripts and other education-related documents. The same information is also forwarded to youth's field officers. This new system expedites the process for youth to obtain their transcripts and allows field officers to follow up on a youth's educational goals.

While Sacramento's reform efforts around CSEC are still in the early implementation phase, the team has already begun to see a significant improvement in information sharing and collaboration between child-serving agencies. Between July 2014 and February 2016, the specialized CSEC court docket processed over 197 referrals, of which over 98 percent were female, and over 60 percent were youth of color. As implementation continues, there may be an important opportunity for Sacramento County to analyze the gender and racial factors in CSEC reporting and treatments, as well as implications for practices and policies as other system and population-level indicators are measured.

Juvenile Justice Diversion and Treatment Program (JJTDP)

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely to have been exposed to trauma and have mental and/or behavioral health disorders as compared to their non-delinquent counterparts. Researchers found that more than 75 percent of justice-involved youth have experienced traumatic victimization (Sprague, 2008); approximately 50 to 75 percent of justice-involved youth have mental health disorders (Meservey & Skowrya, 2015; Underwood & Washington, 2016), and justice-involved youth are three times more likely to experience mental health disorders than their non-delinquent counterparts (Merikangas et al., 2010). This correlation is not surprising, given that trauma exposure can alter a child's brain and nervous system, causing an increase in stress reactivity and impulsivity and a decrease in self-regulating abilities. In turn, children exposed to trauma are more likely to experience mental and behavioral health disorders, perform poorly in school, and engage in risky and delinquent behaviors (National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2016).

⁴ The MOU is signed by the Juvenile Court of Sacramento County, Sacramento County Child Protective Services, Sacramento County Probation Department, Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services, Sacramento County Public Health, Sacramento County Counsel, Sacramento County Public Defender, Sacramento County District Attorney, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento Unified School District, Sacramento County Office of Education, Children's Law Center of California – Sacramento, Children's Receiving Home, University of California, Davis CAARE Center, and Another Choice, Another Chance.



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Unfortunately, juvenile justice agencies often do not have the necessary resources to sufficiently meet the complicated needs of these youth (Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Collaborative for Change, 2014). Assistant Chief Shores recognized this service gap in mental health services for youth in the juvenile justice system when he first attended CJJR’s MSI CP in 2010. As part of his Capstone Project from that program, he led a diversion initiative to better understand and address the mental health needs of justice-involved youth. According to Assistant Probation Chief Shores, the Certificate Program was an “important opportunity for Sacramento County to work more collaboratively and to promote cross-system coordination” (personal communication, October 10, 2017).

Utilizing the Mental Health Services Act⁵ funding, the Probation Department partnered with the County’s Behavioral Health Services and the River Oak Center for Children in 2010 to develop JJDTP, a diversion program for justice-involved and crossover youth with mental health needs. Originally designed as a community-based diversion program, it has evolved to include both pre-court and court diversion. This is because program staff found that court and probation intervention were necessary to provide the oversight and structure that some youth needed to prevent subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system. Over time, JJDTP has expanded to serve non-system involved youth as well as system-involved youth in the community.

To be eligible for JJDTP, youth must:

- meet the clinical criteria of Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED), be at risk of eminent removal from home, or have ongoing mental health issues;
- be between ages 13 and 19 when referred; and
- voluntarily agree to participate in the diversion program.

Typically, youth are referred to JJDTP after receiving a citation or getting arrested; however, youth without a citation but who are beginning to act out can also be referred to JJDTP. Once referred and accepted into the program, youth can receive services up to their 26th birthday regardless of their probation status, as long as these services are deemed clinically necessary. In JJDTP, youth receive individualized services including but not limited to: mental health treatment, alcohol and drug counseling, intensive case management, independent living skills development, as well as housing, transportation, and financial support. On average, youth participate in the program for approximately ten months, but participation can range from two to 29 months.

The program has served over 370 youth since its inception in 2010 and shows promising outcomes in improving education performance and reducing rates of arrest. Based on the JJDTP Annual Report (2016) prepared by River Oak Center for Children, youth reported an increase in school attendance and improved grades. Sixty-eight percent of youth reported that they attend school frequently (“always” or “most of the time”), and 22 percent of youth reported having “good” grades during their participation in the JJDTP. Comparatively, when asked about youth’s school attendance and performance in the 12 months before admission into the JJDTP, 55 percent of youth reported frequent school attendance, and only 12 percent reported having “good” grades in school. In terms of youth’s self-reported rates of arrest, 47 percent fewer youth reported being arrested in the past 12 months, compared to arrests reported prior to the 12 months period. In addition, a service satisfaction survey was administered to youth and their families. The 2014 survey indicated that 88 percent of youth and 93 percent of the families reported that they were satisfied with the program (River Oak Center for Children, 2016). A comprehensive analysis of the program is pending completion in mid-2018.

⁵ In 2004, California voters approved Proposition 63, also known as the Mental Health Services Act to expand mental health services by levying a one percent tax on taxpayers earning over \$1 million per year.



Efforts to Transform the Sacramento County Youth Detention Facility (YDF)

Given the high prevalence of behavioral health disorders and experience with trauma for justice-involved youth, it is paramount that residential placement facilities are equipped to provide the support that these youth need with a trauma-informed approach. As the Report of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence recommended, it is critical that all youth at risk of exposure to violence and trauma are screened and assessed, and that professionals working with these youth provide trauma-informed and evidence-based treatment (Listenbee et al., 2012). These research findings and recommendations have encouraged juvenile justice leaders to explore innovative ways to meet youth’s mental and behavioral health needs, particularly those within secure facilities, and to address youth’s behavior with developmentally appropriate approaches.

Acknowledging the significant number of high-risk, high-needs youth in secure facilities and the importance of evidence-based, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate interventions, Sacramento County leaders have been working to improve the treatment and services for youth placed in YDF, its detention facility. In 2009, the Sacramento County Probation Department entered into a consent decree resulting from settlement of litigation regarding conditions of confinement. To improve conditions and address the concerns of the court, leaders in the department began a series of initiatives at YDF. While the stipulated decree was terminated in December 2012, these initiatives have continued and expanded since then.

As part of their secure facility reform efforts, the Sacramento Probation Department supported two leadership teams to attend CJJR’s Youth in Custody Certificate Program⁶ (YIC CP) in 2013 and 2014. The teams focused on different aspects of policy and system improvement within YDF and developed two Capstone Projects. One team spearheaded efforts to shift the historically punitive and correctional approach to one that cultivates developmentally appropriate interventions and trauma-informed practices, and to revamp the behavioral management system. The other team sought to enhance and expand mental health care for detained youth through rigorous staff training and the development of evidence-based programming.

The 2013 Sacramento YIC CP team consisted of three YDF leaders: Ruby Jones, Supervising Probation Officer; Marc Nigel, Court and Community Schools Director; and Assistant Probation Chief Shores. They noticed that the correctional approaches at YDF had a tendency to reinforce oppositional relationships between staff and youth, and that staff often defaulted their behavioral management strategy to punishment rather than engagement. To shift the correctional mindset and attitudes, the leadership team created a Compass Committee. This committee, which included probation officers, mental health staff, and school staff, guided the development of a set of core values focused on teamwork, communication, empathy, and growth. These principles are emphasized through a “Culture Card,” a pocket-sized pamphlet that describes the desired culture and lists the core values of the facility (see Appendix A). The Culture Card is distributed to all staff and embedded in daily staff meetings, where senior staff members facilitate discussions on day-to-day applications of the values. To further embed these values, all probation staff are required to complete training in trauma-informed practices and developmentally appropriate intervention strategies, including Think Trauma⁷, adolescent brain development, youth relationship building, and working with at-risk youth (including the CSEC population).

⁶ The YIC CP is designed to help leaders implement or accelerate systemic change to improve outcomes for youth in custody. The program provides an interactive and dynamic learning environment with instruction from national experts on cutting edge ideas, policies and practices from across the country. Specifically, the program focuses on the serious, high-risk justice-involved youth population and utilizes modules that review and integrate best practices including family engagement, trauma-informed treatment and strength-based approaches.

⁷ Think Trauma is a PowerPoint-based training curriculum that provides juvenile justice staff a framework and guidelines on how to work with youth through a trauma-informed approach in residential setting (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.).



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This shift in culture improved staff’s relationship with youth and served as a foundation for the Positive Behavior Motivation Program, a developmentally appropriate behavioral incentive program established to promote pro-social behaviors. Originally, YDF used a token economy system, where youth earned and lost points depending on their weekly behaviors. Staff noticed that the behavioral data showed a much higher rate of discipline incidents toward the end of the week, suggesting that the system was reducing a youth’s incentive to behave once they failed to earn points early in the week. Realizing that the traditional token economy system was not effective in encouraging positive behavior, the leadership team at YDF modified the incentive system to create a more educational and engaging approach that aligns with the current research of adolescents’ cognitive development.

Under the new system, youth can earn unlimited points. The expanded privileges and incentives allow youth to earn “Honor Status” and become peer mentors for engaging in pro-social behaviors. Staff were trained to award youth with a generous amount of points for desirable behaviors, personally explain the reasons for failure to earn points as soon as possible, and provide clear instructions on how youth can earn points. Both youth and staff are fully engaged in the process and have the opportunity to develop positive rapport similar to those of mentees and mentors, rather than detainees and correctional officers.

The Culture Card and Positive Behavior Motivation Program were implemented in October 2014 within YDF. These initiatives are correlated with a decreased number of behavioral incidents requiring the use of force, as well as shortened duration of room confinement. Between 2013 and 2016, there was a 32 percent decrease in staff’s use of force (300 incidents of restraints in 2013, and 203 incidents in 2016). In terms of room confinement, the average duration decreased by over 70 percent (5.79 hours in 2013, and 1.69 hours in 2016). It is noteworthy that while the average daily population for YDF has decreased by 24 percent between 2013 (192 youth) and 2016 (145 youth), the reductions in behavioral incidents and use of force exceeded this reduction in population and showed promising results.

Building on the 2013 YIC CP Capstone Project, the 2014 YIC CP team expanded YDF’s mental health services and education programming to promote positive outcomes for youth in their custody. The 2014 team consisted of three senior staff from YDF: Christopher Eldridge, Mental Health Program Coordinator; Brad Marietti, Supervising Deputy Probation Officer; and Patti McGowan, Assistant Probation Division Chief. They recognized that youth entering YDF often had complicated mental health issues along with developmental delays and maltreatment history that required intensive treatment and services. To ensure that addressing youth’s mental health and educational needs was a top priority for YDF leadership, the team convened a series of meetings to support multi-disciplinary collaboration within the facility, including a weekly Special Needs Committee meeting, a monthly Mental Health Collaborative meeting, and a monthly meeting to discuss educational issues. These meetings involve probation officers, school and mental health staff, as well as representatives from the District Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, the Courts, Health and Human Services, and a mental health provider as appropriate, and are designed to enhance communication between agencies and provide youth with continuous, comprehensive services.

A primary function of the Special Needs Committee is to create action plans for each resident and identify youth with special needs upon admission. The Committee also identifies opportunities for expanding the availability and quality of mental health services for youth residents. As part of this effort, YDF increased the number of university students on site providing services to youth through the facility’s Mental Health Intern Program. Moreover, a university psychiatry professor and a post-doctorate resident are now on site once a week to observe YDF staff’s interaction with youth and provide consultation, feedback, and support.

The Committee also focuses on enhancing the facility environment and guided the overhaul of the facility’s Special Needs Unit to reflect trauma-informed principles. Additionally, the Committee created a



Multi-Sensory De-Escalation Room (MSDR) to help youth in crisis de-escalate through sensory activities, and designated staff to help identify youth’s triggers and strengths. Multi-sensory rooms are specialized areas designed to provide sensory stimulation that help facilitate relaxation and develop self-regulation routines to cope with stressful situations (Wiglesworth & Farnworth, 2016). They are often used to reduce reliance on punitive disciplinary actions such as seclusion and restraint (Wiglesworth & Farnworth, 2016). The MSDR in YDF includes colorful painted murals, padded furniture, floor pads, beanbag chairs, therapy balls, weighted blankets, and other assorted objects for mindfulness and distress tolerance activities. A trained mental health staff is always present to facilitate sensory activities and help youth self-regulate, and all YDF staff are trained in using the MSDR. YDF staff tracks MSDR outcomes using an “Average Pre- and Post- Emotional Scale” per session; data showed a 47 percent decrease in the Pre- and Post- Emotional Scale, suggesting that the MSDR is effective in helping youth regulate their emotions. Given the effectiveness of the MSDR, YDF staff expanded its use to a second room that all youth can access. Consequently, upon entering the facility, all youth now receive behavioral health/trauma screening and MSDR orientation, and are encouraged to continue using the MSDR as a resource.

YDF staff have also made concerted efforts to engage youth and families in creative ways. Educational and vocational programming was expanded; the facility now offers over 50 programs for youth, including mentoring, religion, music, gardening, library, swimming, basketball, and construction training programs. Probation staff, contracted private providers, community-based organizations, and volunteers support the implementation of these programs. For example, in 2014 YDF partnered with the Boys & Girls Club to create a full-time, fully staffed club inside the facility and to support and mentor detained youth in career exploration, life skills training, art, and leadership. The facility also created a “Justice League,” an intramural sports league that allows youth in living units to compete against one another. Social support and skill training aimed at fostering successful reentry are also provided through this effort. Youth are able to interact with community volunteers and community organization leaders, develop vocational skills, and build relationships with people in their community.

In addition to skill and relationship building, an integral part of reentry is to connect families with youth and engage them in the youth’s rehabilitative process. In this regard, the YDF leadership team reviewed and revised the family visiting guidelines, which now allow parents and guardians, as well as siblings over the age of 12 to visit seven days a week. Furthermore, the facility began to offer parent orientation and chaplaincy visits, and designated a larger space for family visits.

The development of enhanced services inside the facility generated recognition that reentry work could be further improved. Guided by the initiatives noted above, Sacramento County Probation leadership developed the “REDY---GO” (or “Reentry Development for Youth”) program to provide continuity of care, coordination for community transition, and stabilization for youth not eligible for AB12⁸ services and who are returning home from YDF or another residential placement. The REDY---GO Team members include staff from Behavioral Health Services, Sacramento County Office of Education, YDF, and Probation (i.e., the assigned Probation Field or Placement Officer), as well as the family, youth, and any other identified supporters (e.g., counselors, mentors). To prepare for reintegration and reunification, Reentry Liaisons, who are also part of the REDY---GO Team, work collaboratively with youth, families, and other team members for a minimum of two weeks prior to release from YDF or 45 days prior to release from other longer-term out-of-home placements. Team members utilize a comprehensive assessment based on youth’s strengths and needs to identify the appropriate services, and work together to develop a transition plan and an individualized case plan. Youth and family voices are particularly

⁸ AB12 (or Extended Foster Care) services provide support to foster youth in a secure and supervised environment so youth can experience independent living but at the same time maintain a safety net (Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).



important in this process to guide the adopted plan. The reentry process assists the youth and family with housing, employment opportunities, community-based medical and behavioral health interventions, education, positive youth development, mentorships, life skills, pro-social activities, and family bonding. Through effective communication and coordination, this process positions youth to successfully return home.

Implementation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)

It is well documented that youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are a unique and vulnerable population. Research shows that youth who have been maltreated are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior, and once youth have “crossed over” between systems, they are more likely to be separated from their families, experience numerous placements, have behavioral health issues, and perform poorly in school (Stewart, M., Lutz, L., and Herz, D., 2010).

To address the unique needs of crossover youth, in 2010 CJJR developed the CYPM. The CYPM provides communities with a research-based framework to enhance collaboration across systems and better serve crossover youth and families. The practice model is designed to assist jurisdictions in reducing: the number of youth crossing over and becoming dually-involved; the number of youth placed in out-of-home care and congregate care; and the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, particularly in the crossover population. Since the model’s creation, CJJR has worked with over 100 communities in the U.S. to implement the CYPM.

In 2015, Sacramento County engaged with CJJR on the CYPM initiative. Similar to other multi-system efforts in the county, a critical initial step was convening an “Executive Committee” to guide and set the vision for the work. This group included Sacramento’s Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Deputy Director of Child Protective Services, Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Services, Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Education, Assistant County Counsel, and other key leaders. Working jointly with CJJR, the Executive Committee also established an “Implementation Team” to help identify existing strengths and challenges to cross-system coordination and to assist with charting a path forward. This team included a wide array of individuals, including staff from Probation, assistant district attorneys, assistant public defenders, law enforcement officials, community providers, and youth and family advocates.

The result of this collaborative effort was the development of a set of multi-system protocols⁹ that govern how crossover youth cases are handled in the county. While the protocols are comprehensive and cover many dimensions of practice, two central themes feature prominently in the document: (1) information sharing and (2) multisystem teaming. The protocols set forth clear guidance on how system partners must identify youth at the point of crossover (e.g., when a youth involved in the child welfare system is arrested or cited for an alleged offense) and share that information with system partners, consistent with legal parameters. The document also details how team meetings must be convened to assist with the ongoing coordination of case assessment, planning and management and how partners must regularly communicate with one another and with youth and families. A novel approach in the county, system partners—including staff from Probation, Child Protective Services, Behavioral Health Services, the schools, and community providers—are now required to come together frequently to fashion a coordinated response that meets the needs of crossover youth and families.

After system partners and stakeholders were trained on the CYPM, the protocols officially took effect in October 2016. While implementation is relatively recent and data is currently being collected to evaluate the impact of the work, preliminary results appear to be extremely positive. System officials report that

⁹ Similar to the CSEC efforts, the County partnered with the WestCoast Children’s Clinic to assist with the writing of the protocols. Policy and Communications Associate, Hannah Haley, played a key role in leading this effort.



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communication across agencies is vastly improved and that line-level staff members—including probation officers and CPS social workers—now have a better understanding of each organization’s operations and the complexities of crossover youth cases. Youth and families also appreciate the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the case planning process and have noted that system partners appear to be working as a unified team.

Conclusion

The innovative reform efforts highlighted in this brief have allowed Sacramento to achieve better coordination across the entire continuum of the juvenile justice system. At the front end, the CYPM, CSEC Court, and JJDTP prevent youth from becoming further involved in the juvenile justice system by diverting them to appropriate programs and services. At the back end, leaders in the Probation Department work with court, child welfare, behavioral health, and education partners to effectively serve youth in custody and upon community reentry. These initiatives are great examples of how multiple systems within a jurisdiction can work together across all stages of the justice system to improve outcomes for youth.



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Appendix A (Sacramento County YDF Culture Card)

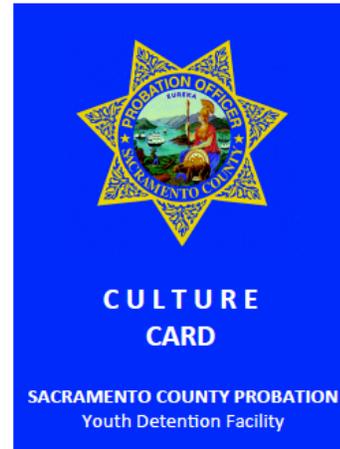
Workplace Beliefs

- Teamwork and communication are essential to positive outcomes.
- Challenges are what make life interesting, overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.
- Work together to find fun at work.
- You can't lead the people if you don't serve the people.
- Use your experience and knowledge to benefit the growth of others.
- The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is just a little "extra".
- Don't find fault, find remedy.
- Whatever you do, do it to the best of your abilities.

Vision Statement

To empower all employees within the facility to cultivate a safe and positive environment. To draw upon the strengths and talents of all to promote a culture that can be passed onto the youth, creating the characteristics of a healthy community.

Sacramento County Probation Department
9601 Kiefer Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95827



Culture Card

This Culture Card is to guide and unite all within the facility to follow a path that promotes growth and change through our mission, values and beliefs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Youth Detention Facility (YDF) is to provide a safe and secure environment for the youth detained by the Juvenile Justice System. The YDF also provides educational experiences and activities that promote the health and well-being of the youth served; encourages law-abiding behavior; teaches individual accountability for one's choices; and models pro-social behaviors.

Values

These are how the culture requires its leaders and employees to think and behave to implement, support and maintain the desired culture.

RESPECT:

Treat others the way you want to be treated

HONESTY:

Always tell the truth

SELF-DISCIPLINE:

Each day, look for ways to improve yourself

RESPONSIBILITY:

Take ownership of the choices you make

INTEGRITY:

Easy or not, do the right thing

EMPATHY:

Seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another

COMMUNICATION:

State your thoughts clearly and respectfully

PATIENCE:

Time is on your side

