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Models for Change

Models for Change is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform through targeted investments in key states, with core support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to the public. The initiative is underway in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana and Washington and, through action networks focusing on key issues, in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

ModelsforChange
Systems Reform In Juvenile Justice

The Mental Health/ Juvenile Justice Action Network

Mental Health / Juvenile Justice

ActionNetwork
A Project of
ModelsforChange

The Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network

The Models for Change Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network is a partnership of states working together to improve services and policies for youth with mental health needs involved with the juvenile justice system. It was established by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in June of 2007 as an opportunity to bring select states together with the common goal of working collaboratively to establish a national leadership community at the forefront of mental health and juvenile justice policy and practice.

Eight states comprise the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network:

- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Washington

Goals of the Action Network

The work of the MH/JJ Action Network is organized around four key goals:

- 1) Supporting and enhancing mental health/juvenile justice initiatives already underway within each Action Network state by providing resources, information and expertise (ENHANCE)
- 2) Developing and implementing new and innovative solutions to common problems (DRIVE)
- 3) Providing national leadership on issues pertaining to mental health and juvenile justice. (LEAD)
- 4) Fostering the developing and exchange of ideas among the Action Network states (SHARE)

Key Features of the Action Network

Cross-State Strategic Innovation Groups

The MH/JJ Action Network is using Strategic Innovation Groups (SIGs) to drive the development and implementation of innovative solutions to common problems. The MH/JJ Action Network is focusing on two issues: Front-End Diversion and Workforce Development.

The Front-End Diversion SIG is working to increase the availability of pre-adjudicatory diversion options for youth with mental health needs, with an emphasis on diversion from the earliest points of contact in the juvenile justice system. States participating on this SIG are pursuing one of the three following approaches:

- **Law Enforcement:** Developing a juvenile CIT training curriculum and service linkages for community and school law enforcement officials (CO, IL, LA and PA)
- **School-focused:** Creating mobile mental health urgent response teams to respond to incidents in schools involving youth with mental health needs (CT, OH, WA)
- **Probation-Based:** Using specially trained mental health probation officers to work with small caseloads of youth with mental health needs (TX)

The Workforce Development SIG is enhancing community education and training to recruit and retain staff better equipped to work with the large numbers of youth with mental health needs involved with the juvenile justice system. States participating on this SIG are pursuing one of two approaches:

- **Mental Health Training and Education:** Developing and implementing a youth mental health training and education package for staff working within juvenile justice agencies and programs (CT, IL, OH, TX, WA)
- **Workforce Collaborative:** Creating a multi-system collaborative designed to help create a skilled workforce to support a behavioral health evidence-based practice initiative underway in the state (LA)

Enhancing Work in the States

In addition to this cross-state work, the MH/JJ Action Network is supporting the following individual projects in each of the Action Network states:

- CO: Implementing a mental health screen in all juvenile justice agencies in Denver
- CT: Identifying mental health interventions appropriate for older adolescents, and developing juvenile competency standards
- IL: Enhancing a state trauma initiative in juvenile facilities, and identifying best practice models for family involvement
- LA: Providing education and training to key stakeholders to enhance evidence-based practices
- OH: Creating a resource guide on the behavioral health evidence-based practices for youth being used in Ohio
- PA: Establishing a Family Involvement Workgroup to identify ways to engage families and youth in juvenile justice and mental health programs
- TX: Strengthening mental health aftercare linkages for youth leaving juvenile correctional placement
- WA: Coordinating and integrating all of the children's mental health reform initiatives underway in the state

Creating a National Leadership Community

The MH/JJ Action Network is working to create a leadership community that will shape nationwide responses for addressing the needs of youth with mental health issues who come in contact with the juvenile justice system. While this is a longer-term goal for the MH/JJ Action Network, it is expected that learnings from the Action Network will influence policy and program development related to mental health and juvenile justice across the country.