Family Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System

Reclaiming Futures National Conference
April 27, 2016
Why Focus on Families?

- Involving families of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system leads to better outcomes for youth.

- Treatment interventions that actively engage the youth and their family are known to be the most effective.
Benefits of Family Involvement

**Families benefit by:**
- Knowing where their child is and what is happening to them
- Understanding the process and expectations of the juvenile justice system
- Feeling valued for the important information that they can share about their child

**Juvenile justice system benefits by:**
- Gaining important and reliable knowledge and insights about a youth
- Establishing working partnerships with families that increase the likelihood of follow-through with service plans
- Building a sense of shared responsibility for youth
National juvenile justice reform effort funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Goal was to create replicable and sustainable models that could be shared with other states/jurisdictions

To create a more fair and effective juvenile justice system that supports learning and growth and promotes accountability to ensure all kids can grow up to be healthy, productive members of society
Created in response to shared concerns about mental health in the 4 original states: IL, LA, PA, and WA

Addition of 4 states: CT, CO, OH, and TX

MH/JJ Action Network identified 3 critical priorities:
- Early diversion
- Workforce development
- Family involvement
Providing more guidance and direction to support family involvement in the juvenile justice system

- Resources to help youth and families better understand the juvenile justice system

- Training and educating juvenile justice administrators and staff on why and how to better involve families, and incorporating this information into juvenile justice policy and practice
Family members often lack basic information about the juvenile justice system and their rights and responsibilities as parents of a justice-involved youth with behavioral health needs.

- Pamphlets, guides, and handbooks designed to help families and youth understand the juvenile justice system, their rights and responsibilities, how decisions are made, and ways to participate in decision-making processes.
Family members can also become involved in advocating for juvenile justice system reform that promotes policy and procedural changes that help all families who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.
Guidance for Juvenile Justice Systems

Training, that includes families as trainers, should be available to help staff:
✓ Better understand the perspective and backgrounds of families
✓ Gain knowledge to increase the quality of interaction with families
✓ Learn effective ways to solicit valuable information and knowledge from families
✓ Value a mutually respectful partnerships with families

Institute policy and procedural changes that:
✓ Create a welcoming environment for families
✓ Develop family-friendly publications to clearly explain key features of the process, system, or facility
✓ Recruit family members to serve on planning or advisory groups
✓ Hire family members
✓ Engage family advocacy
✓ Solicit family input via focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and town hall-type meetings
✓ Help families establish connections to other families through peer support groups
✓ Change visitation policies at facilities to make it easier and more convenient for families
Family Involvement in Juvenile Justice - Sharing The Pennsylvania Model

Reclaiming Futures
Miami Florida
April 27, 2016

Wendy Luckenbill
Co-Chair- Family Involvement in Juvenile Justice, PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers
wluckenbill@gmail.com
Overview

• History & Logic of the Family Involvement Movement in PA

• The Development of Tools

• Building Momentum

• Application for other Jurisdictions, States, & Nationally
Your Goals

• How can I help you?

• What do you want to know?

• wluckenbill@gmail.com

• http://cfc.ncmhjj.com/resources/family-involvement/ (National resource on FIJJ)
The Family Lens

Juvenile Justice Demands For Family Involvement That Aren’t Supported
We must keep in mind that we need to work within the parameters of the Juvenile Justice System, we can’t lose sight of that.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, PA FI Monograph
Definitions for Family Involvement in Juvenile Justice.

Family membership is defined by the family, and includes traditional, non-traditional and cultural allies of the child and family.

Family involvement practices and policies empower families, based on their strengths, to have an active role in their child’s disposition and treatment.
History of PA’s Juvenile Justice Family Involvement (FI) Work

• 2005- Family involvement identified as a major issue for PA’s Models for Change (MFC) work

• 2007- MFC Family Involvement workgroup convened with juvenile justice and family advocacy leaders to identify necessary practice and policy changes.

• 2009- Publication of the Family Involvement Monograph
“…what has yet to be developed is the system wide adoption of effective, evidence-based strategies and services that support the family role at both the individual child and the larger policy and planning levels.”
4 Monograph Findings

• **Availability & Access to Effective Early Prevention & Intervention:**
  *Families may have history of frustration with children’s systems.*

• **Communicating Respect:**
  *Families & practitioners alike hold respect as key to engagement.*

• **Juvenile Court Policy & Practice:**
  *Local juvenile justice departments can improve their family engagement efforts.*

• **Statewide Policy & Oversight:**
  *State level revision of practice & policy will eliminate barriers to engagement & increase capacity for proactive & effective family involvement.*
Principles of Family Involvement in Juvenile Justice
page 19, PA FI Monograph

• Effective and authentic family involvement supports the principles and practice of balanced and restorative justice and engages the family and juvenile justice system together with the youth in repairing the harm and moving the youth to become a competent and responsible community member.

• Family involvement is predicated on the recognition that the family is a child’s primary emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual resource.

• Families are involved by the inherent nature of their role, and the quality of their involvement hinges on a dynamic interaction of personal and environmental factors.

• All families will act in the best interest of their child, and fulfill their role, when they have the knowledge, skills, and supports necessary to provide ongoing and developmentally appropriate guidance and interaction.

• Where families are unable to act in the best interest of their child, this should be seen as a complex phenomenon that the family would choose to counteract, if an avenue to do so presented itself.

• Positive family engagement involves a discrete set of approaches and services that systems can provide to families to assist them in meeting their family’s needs, including in helping them make the best use of system and community resources.

A juvenile justice system committed to family involvement ensures that there are flexible and authentic opportunities for families to partner in the design, implementation, and monitoring of their child’s plan, as well as juvenile justice system policy, program, and practices which support responsive, effective outcomes for youth.
The FI Monograph led to:

- Regional Forums convened throughout the state on the issue.

- A national dialogue via the Models for Change Action Network and beyond.

- The development of policy and tools based on monograph findings:
  
  - The Family Involvement Training Curriculum for juvenile probation staff (adapted for juvenile defenders, and juvenile detention center staff and 5 states including New Mexico).
  
  - The Family Guide to Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System
  
  - FI adopted as core value of the PA Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES)
  
  - Standardized Family Satisfaction Survey – Delivered at local level with data collected for Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS), PA’s JJ electronic tracking system.
National Paper Reinforces PA’s Call for Family Involvement in JJ 2011

Safety, Fairness, Stability: Repositioning Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare to Engage Families & Communities

“...two streams of practice theory can inform how to engage families. These are system of care (Stroul and Friedman, 1986) and restorative justice (Zehr, 1990).”

http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/famengagement/FamilyEngagementPaper.pdf
PA FI Curriculum- Origins

• Acknowledgement that addressing family involvement would mean a “Sea Change” for the juvenile system and changing hearts and minds.

• Consensus that a training was needed for juvenile justice practitioners to concretely enhance their ability to engage with families.

• Family Involvement became a targeted area of improvement for the Models for Change Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Cross Action Network
Curriculum Design

An Original Product Based on:

- Family Involvement Monograph
- Experiences of Family Peer Support and Juvenile Justice Leaders
- The PA Victims Curriculum
- Family Centered Practices including System of Care and Family Group Decision Making
Curriculum Goals

• Lessen families’ feelings of confusion & marginalization by a system with mixed roles for them.

• Increase practitioners’ ability to partner with families through increased understanding of the family viewpoint, and acquisition of skills and tools to supporting this collaborative process.

• Increase positive outcomes for youth in conflict with the law through effective collaboration between juvenile probation & families.
Can’t Be Unseen!

You just realized that all ducks are actually wearing dog masks.
Family Involvement Support Levels
FIJJ Curriculum Participant’s Guide

Juvenile Justice Family Involvement policy & practice should include:

• **A universal level** of approaches applicable to all families based on respect, shared information, & authentic opportunities for input.

• **A secondary level** of approaches which addresses families who need additional supports that encourage trust, participation in the process, & provides help with their child.

• **A tertiary level** of approaches which addresses families who are not involved or act in ways that appear challenging or detrimental to the child’s supervision & treatment.
## FI Curriculum Tool: Family Engagement Considerations for Case Study Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Engagement Considerations</th>
<th>Strengths- Factors that support engagement</th>
<th>Needs- Factors that challenge engagement</th>
<th>Recommendations /Referrals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the family comfortable working with the Juvenile Justice System?</td>
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<td>Does the family understand their role in helping their child during the child’s Juvenile Justice involvement?</td>
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<td>Is the family comfortable working with other child serving systems (school, mental health/D&amp;A), and sees those systems as resources?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the family have <strong>existing natural supports</strong> (i.e. family, community, church) on which they can rely?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the family have <strong>existing formal supports</strong> (i.e. mental, substance abuse services, parenting training and support, respite, family peer advocates)?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive Family Involvement Measures</strong></td>
<td><strong>I currently do this… (check box)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Factors that support me in doing this measure.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Factors that challenge me in doing this measure.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I immediately phone families to speak to them and introduce myself, confirm pertinent dates (intake, hearing, etc), and provide my contact information.</td>
<td>❑ N/A ❑ Frequently ❑ Sometimes ❑ Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>During the intake interview, I provide families with information about the juvenile justice system, Court process, and services.</td>
<td>❑ N/A ❑ Frequently ❑ Sometimes ❑ Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I explain the steps in the process, including assessment, case plan development, and what to expect for a diversionary program or a court appearance, as applicable.</td>
<td>❑ N/A ❑ Frequently ❑ Sometimes ❑ Never</td>
<td></td>
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FI Curriculum Tool: My Family Involvement Plan

Name     Date

Within the next ______ months, I will:

1) Continue to do the following Supportive Family Involvement Measures:
   I will call families before every meeting to ensure they are aware of the meeting, and can ask any preliminary questions.

2) I need to increase and/or decrease the following factors that support or challenge the above measures:
   I will discuss with my supervisor the possibility that I can share my mobile phone number and email address with the families of youth on my case load to increase ability to quickly get messages between the parties.

   I will change my current family contact form to include a request for a family’s email and cell phone, and determine if they use text messaging. I will also create document to give to families with my mobile phone and email on them, and which also specifies when and why they can contact me (i.e. brief messages only, complicated concerns are best discussed in person rather then through messages.)
Curriculum Participant Assessment, Question Seven: “The benefits of family involvement in the court process outweigh the drawbacks.”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>79.3</td>
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</table>
Curriculum Next Steps

- Added to Core Curriculum for PA Juvenile Probation Officer Training, under the Center for Juvenile Justice Training & Research, Shippensburg University with accompanying SAG funding process for Counties.

- Trained 20 Family Advocate & Juvenile Justice Practitioners as FL Curriculum Co-Trainers

- 2016 - Launching Revision to Align with Emerging State and National Advancements

- Expanding FL Curriculum to New Audiences:
  - Adapted for Juvenile Defenders Association of PA
  - Models for Change Legacy Event- Trained Out of State Juvenile Justice Representatives to Adapt and Adopt the Curriculum (DC, IL, LA, NM, WI)

- Establishing an Evidence Base Through:
  - Study of Pilot Assessments
  - Study of Legacy Event Outcomes
  - Study of Changes to Local Policy & Practice Post Training
  - Reports on all 3 Topics Completed by Researcher
The PA Family Guide
Distributed @ JP offices and system partners.
Understanding Key Information
Family Guide Contents:

- Introduction
- How To Use This Guide
- Juvenile Justice System-How Is It Different?
- Pa’s Juvenile Justice System Explained
- Pa’s Juvenile Justice Flowchart
- The People You Meet
- Advocating For Your Child
- When Your Child Has Been Arrested
- What’s Next? Home or Detention?
- Juvenile Court Intake
- Informal Supervision
- Formal Processing
- What Could Happen At The Disposition Hearing?
- A Families Roles & Responsibilities
- Juvenile Court Involvement & Your Child’s Future
- Terms Used In Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System
- Services & Supports for Families
- References & Resources
- Acknowledgements, Contributions
- More Information
How Juvenile Justice is Using the Guide

• Over 100,000 guides distributed to families primarily through county probation offices.

• Provided in waiting rooms.

• Provided through officers at intake and system partners.

• Used in trainings with court staff to enhance empathy and engagement skills.

• Translation to Spanish in process.

• Establishing an Evidence Base Through Study of Impact on Families and Practice at County Probation Offices.
How Families Can Use the Guide

Excerpt, Page 5- “HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You can use this guide during the time your child is involved with juvenile Court, from time of arrest until he or she is released from the Court’s supervision. This guide provides information about:

• What is going to happen to your child as he or she goes through the system

• Ways that you, juvenile probation and the Juvenile Court can work together to help your child

• People you and your child will meet in the juvenile justice system

• The rights and responsibilities of everyone involved, including you, your child, juvenile probation and the Court.”
Engaging Families for System Change - the Continuum  (Monograph P. 16)

Foundation

- Family members are treated with respect and dignity by juvenile justice system professionals.

- Families are considered important to ensuring successful outcomes for youth.

- Family members are actively sought out and their views, insights, and experiences are valued and utilized.

- Information is regularly provided to families from the time of initial contact …and is provided in a variety of means which respect families’ cultures, experiences, and needs.
Engaging Families for System Change—the Continuum

Systemic

• Transparent, Accessible, Flexible, Welcoming, Follow-up, Clear Impact

• Community Brokers, Focus Groups, Advocacy and Community Groups

• Who are your allies?
Family Satisfaction Survey - 2015

Suggested Questions

• I was treated with respect by my child’s probation officer.
• My child’s probation officer provided information to me that explained the Juvenile Court process.
• My child’s probation officer asked about my child’s needs and strengths.
• I had input into the development of my child’s case/supervision plan.
• My child’s probation officer explained the rules and expectations for my child to successfully complete his/her probation.
• I understood how the activities on my child’s case/supervision plan were to help him/her successfully complete his/her probation.
• I understood how I was able to help my child successfully complete his/her probation.
• I could contact my child’s probation officer with concerns I had about my child’s progress.
• I believed that my input regarding my child was valued.
• My child’s probation officer cared about my child’s success.
• Overall, I believe my child’s probation was a success.
Wrapping Up

Shifting practice & policy will require a commitment to:

• Achieve better family involvement outcomes which can be linked to improved outcomes for the child, the community, the victim & the system.

• Look honestly at underlying biases, skill gaps, & structures which prevent practitioners from effectively & authentically involving families in their child’s juvenile justice experience.

• Include families in this assessment & the subsequent design & implementation of responses.
Not This…

(Parens Patriae)
Not This

(SenArt Films)
This!

All partners informed and respected.
PA Resources

Handouts- Electronic
1. PA BARJ FI Goal 4 -2016
2. PA FI Satisfaction Survey- 2015
3. PA BARJ JJSES Strategy 9-2015
4. PA FI JJ Guide -2011
5. FPA FI JJ Monograph  2009

Online
Next Steps

- Operationalize meaningful family involvement
  - Institute policy and procedural change

- Forthcoming: Technical Assistance Guide on Family Involvement in Juvenile Drug Courts
  - Survey now available from NCMHJJ

Engage – Involve – Empower
Contact Information

National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
345 Delaware Avenue
Delmar, NY 12054

P: 866-962-6455 | E: ncmhjj@prainc.com

www.ncmhjj.com