Transition for Special Populations:
Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System

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*Juvenile Delinquency Rate has dropped from 41.87 in 1998 to 16.17 in 2018.
Trends in Juvenile Detention Center Admissions (1998-2018)

Admissions declined 65% since 2008.
Trends in Youth Development Center Commitments (1998-2018)

Commitments declined 53% since 2008.
Mental health diagnoses are the norm for youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System (national data).

Percentage of Children Aged 6-17 with Diagnosable Mental Health Problems

- Low Income: 21%
- Child Welfare: 50%
- Juvenile Justice: 70%

Mental Health Issues among Transition Age Youth

- 50 to 70% of all youth coming into contact with the juvenile justice system have at least one diagnosable mental health problem.

- Transition aged youth are especially vulnerable; SAMHSA reports that this group has the highest rates of mental health diagnoses.

- Further, utilization of MH services declines sharply during this developmental period.
97% of committed youth had at least one mental health or substance use diagnosis in 2018. 
90% had more than one diagnosis. 
Committed youth had an average of 3 distinct mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnoses. 
50% of those with a MH diagnosis also had a substance use disorder. 
100% of those with a substance use disorder had a co-occurring mental health diagnosis. 
Trauma-related disorders were present in 80% of girls and 40% of boys committed to YDCs in 2018.
Most Prevalent Diagnostic Categories in 2018 YDC Youth

- Depressive Disorders: Boys 24%, Girls 60%
- Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders: Boys 40%, Girls 80%
- Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders: Boys 55%, Girls 47%
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders: Boys 69%, Girls 73%
- Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders: Boys 89%, Girls 93%
Most Prevalent Diagnoses in 2018 YDC Youth

- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: 17% (Boys) 67% (Girls)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder: 31% (Boys) 27% (Girls)
- ADHD: 13% (Boys) 41% (Girls)
- Cannabis-Related Disorder: 50% (Boys) 47% (Girls)
- Conduct Disorder: 68% (Boys) 67% (Girls)
An Imbalance in Developing Brain Systems

Figure 4 from Steinberg, L. (2013). The influence of neuroscience on U.S. Supreme Court decisions involving adolescents' criminal culpability. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 14, 513-518
Age-Crime Curve

- Violent Crime
- Property Crime

Rate of violent crime per 100,000 persons
Rate of property crime per 100,000 persons

Age

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010

North Carolina Department of Public Safety
Psychosocial Maturity and Desistance from Crime
Persistent Offenders Show Especially Stunted Development of Temperance

(from Monahan et al., 2009)
To target impulsivity and self-regulation:

- Programs that target problem-solving and decision-making skills, e.g.:
  - Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS)

- Programs that target self-regulation (frustration tolerance, impulse control, anger management) such as:
  - Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS)
  - Dialectical Behavior Therapy – Emotion Regulation, Mindfulness, and Distress Tolerance modules
  - Aggression Replacement Training - Social Skills, Anger Management, and Moral Reasoning
  - Stop Now and Plan (SNAP)
Service Array Needs

- ENGAGEMENT in services
- Trauma
  - Cognitive Processing Therapy
  - Seeking Safety
  - Traumatic Grief and Loss
- Substance Abuse
- Co-occurring Disorders
- Independent Living Skills
  - Wrap-around for Young Adults (O-YEAH)
  - Supported Employment
  - Transitional Living
  - MST-EA (pilot underway with Youth Villages in Wake and Durham Counties)
- Temperance
  - SPARCS
  - Dialectical Behavior Therapy
  - START NOW ([https://health.uconn.edu/correctional/START_NOWpdf](https://health.uconn.edu/correctional/START_NOWpdf))
  - Collaborative Problem Solving
Juvenile Age Increase

Effective Dec. 1, 2019

- New definition of “delinquent juvenile” includes 16 and 17-year-olds who commit crimes, infractions, or indirect contempt by a juvenile, but **excludes motor vehicle offenses**
- Applies to those who commit misdemeanor- and H- and I-felony level offenses; A through G felony-level offenses committed by 16- and 17-year-olds will still be addressed through the adult criminal justice system
- Also excludes juveniles who:
  1. are 18 and older;
  2. have been transferred to and convicted in superior court; and
  3. have been **convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, including motor vehicle offenses, in district or superior court**
New complaints will enter slowly over time

At least 8,673 new JJ Youth in 2020: Offense trend
NOTE: Complaints filed an average of 32 days following offense.

North Carolina Department of Public Safety
Juvenile Justice Service Directory

- Searchable by problems addressed, classification, zip code, county, name, etc.

- Will trigger a series of emails every 6 months to program providers to allow for entry updates, and to “soft delete” (hide from view) programs that appear closed.

- Will send reports to Chief Court Counselors monthly announcing new additions to the directory in their district.

- 2020: At case planning, service recommendations matched to youth’s home counties and greatest assessed needs will populate the plan automatically with links to program entries for use by the person constructing the case plan.
Want to help?
Have questions?

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