

***The Crossover Youth Practice Model: Delivering
Successful Outcomes for the Juvenile Population***

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I. Introduction

In order to successfully rehabilitate juvenile offenders and establish a quality of life for children active in the Juvenile Justice System who present with a lack of pro-social skills, therapeutic needs and failing family and community support requires a holistic approach. This is best achieved by a collaboration between the Juvenile Justice System and the Child Welfare System, so that the resources available by these System partners designed to meet the child's needs can be leveraged to promote a child's best interest and successfully produce results for an independent, pro-social, law abiding child who will evolve into a responsible adult citizen prepared to make contributions to a free society.

A promising vehicle for achieving these objectives is the Crossover Youth Practice Model developed by the Georgetown University, McCourt School of Public Policy, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform adopted and implemented in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania in 2013.

II. System Overview

Traditionally, the Juvenile Justice System under American Criminal Law, was established to be separate and distinct from the Adult Criminal Justice System. The Adult Criminal Court System operates under a corrections model to punish criminogenic behaviors. On the contrary, Juvenile Justice was designed under a rehabilitative model to address the needs of youth offenders

rather than punish their behavior.¹ The critical distinction between the Adult Criminal Justice System and Juvenile Justice System is the recognition that the deliberate criminal conduct of a juvenile offender is a result of a mind which is in transitional development as opposed to the criminogenic behavior of an adult whose mind is assumed to have been fully developed in maturity with an understanding of right and wrong, limitation oriented, decision making.

Those involved in the work and study of Juvenile Justice are committed to achieving successful outcomes for juvenile offenders through various considerations. These considerations include established evidence that involvement in the Juvenile Justice System will produce negative outcomes for the child. The collaborative effort by both the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems can prevent a child's further penetration in both systems and most importantly reduce the institutional destiny for a number of children. It is a universal objective, crossing all cultures, to reduce the number of children involved in the respective juvenile justice systems. The Crossover Youth Practice Model, developed by Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, utilizes the pro-social services provided by Child Welfare Resources to enhance restorative juvenile justice while these resources are collaboratively embraced by the Juvenile Justice System. The therapeutic services that are available at the child welfare level, and the family engagement measures utilized by Child Welfare Services to reunify families, can equally serve to establish the required consistency of supervision and facilitate meeting a child's needs and welfare to reduce a child's involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. This unified effort will reduce a child's likelihood of re-offending, which addresses a significant interest concerning community protection. Taking into account the numerous issues presented both in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems such as family, environment, trauma exposure, education, peer influence, mental health issues, and anti-social behavior, to name a few, we do best when we treat children holistically, and the Crossover Youth Practice Model methodology is designed to meet that objective and, in turn, give these youth a positive, productive direction into adulthood.

¹ Bell, J. (2015) Repairing the Breach: A Brief History of Youth of Color in the Juvenile Justice System, W. Haywood Burns Institute for Youth Justice, Fairness, and Equality. From "A Positive Youth Justice System" by David Muhammad, National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform.

III. The Crossover Youth Practice Model

These guiding principles are foundational to the Crossover Youth Practice Model which is premised upon a shared-case management operation and execution, where collaboration between Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare is the foundation. The purpose of this collaboration is to jointly identify a child's needs, determine the root cause and then to collectively address those needs by utilizing all the resources of both systems to address the needs of the child and inter-related needs of the family. Since behavior arises out of multiple factors, this holistic approach is vital and provides the stakeholders of both systems through assessment and communication, an ability to discern which of the child's needs are either therapeutic or criminogenic. In addition, through a trauma informed information gathering process concerning the child and family history, both systems are further enabled to determine which of the child's needs are more prevalent so that the child's needs can be properly addressed and improve a child's behavioral outcomes. The effective collaboration requires a transparent exchange of all relevant information pertaining to the child and the child's family and sharing that information to the benefit of addressing the child's needs. Successful execution of this model requires a committed investment by all of the stakeholders in order to establish a working culture which will involve a unified effort in order to produce improved outcomes. The Georgetown Model is designed to accommodate application in various jurisdictions consistent with the principles and structure that the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University designed but, the Model takes into account federal, state and local geographical, political and governmental dynamics.

1. Allegheny County Program Outline

Consistent with those objectives of the Cross-Over Youth Practice Model, in the Juvenile Court of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, those objectives were essentially as follows:

1. The reduction of time that the child is active in either the Juvenile Justice System and/or the Child Welfare System.
2. Reducing the number of children in congregate care and out-of-home placement thus reducing institutionalizing children. We have learned that out-of-home placement produces a lack

of nurture, inability to establish family relations, and interferes with social skill development.

3. Successful stabilization of mental health issues by maintaining therapeutic resources and a consistency of services in order to maintain stabilization of mental health symptoms.
4. Reducing recidivism among juveniles and young adults in order to promote community protection and community safety. Child Welfare would work as an ally to Juvenile Justice to assist in the rehabilitation effort therapeutically so that rehabilitative objectives are better achieved.
5. Reduce the disparity of numbers for children of color in both the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems. This objective would require cultural sensitivity and diversity training to work toward Racial Equity.

The execution and success of the Cross-Over Youth Practice Model, in order to achieve measurable and effective outcomes involves the implementation of two (2) necessary structural components. These components call for establishing the exchange of information necessary between the systems partners and the actual operation of the model itself. The first is the creation of Memorandums of Understanding which are agreements accepted by all stakeholders representing both the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems. This is necessary to accommodate any and all confidentiality requirements as prescribed by law as well as the protection of all due process rights which are Constitutionally guaranteed under the Federal and respective State Constitutions. These memoranda will allow for the sharing of information concerning the subject child and his/her family information to include the child's involvement in either of the two (2) partnered systems and the child's journey leading to the child's involvement in Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice. The second of these components are the Protocols which are established to effectuate the operation of the model which amounts to the procedure that both systems' partners will follow to optimize a child's progress and success in achieving his/her goals. These Protocols involve the use of psychological assessment, risk instruments, diversion measures and a blue print for the awareness and identification of a child's needs. In addition, the Protocols include procedures for the referral of the child from one system to the other and most importantly the referral of services in order to meet the needs of the child and

family. The identification of needs, referral services and the sustaining of those services are meant to address both criminogenic and/or therapeutic social needs of the child as presented. These Protocols also include the exchange of pertinent and necessary information as permitted by the Memoranda of Understanding and the use of data dashboards which are utilized to provide both systems' partners with information as a means to continue the holistic approach in addressing a child's needs. Success of the model's viability will rest upon training which should be put in place for all stakeholders. The training involves legal representatives, probation officers, child welfare caseworkers and social workers, service providers, and mental health personnel. Family Engagement, focused on meeting the needs of the family is a central component of this training. The training is built on the Protocols which utilize the respective services of both systems' partners to achieve the child's goals.

Taking into account the size of the juvenile population serviced in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, it became evident to the Administrators of the models development in our local Court System that we should subscribe to the creation and appointment of a Cross-Systems Manager. The role of this position, is to oversee the operation of the model, maintain consistency, address problems and maintain a collaboration of all stakeholders. In operation of the Crossover Model in Allegheny County since its inception in 2013 the administrators and stakeholders have come to realize the prudence and significant advantages to establishing a competent Cross-System Manager. In addition to addressing all of the aforesaid issues and promoting the efficacy of the Model's operation, one of these significant advantages is the Cross-System Manager's responsibility in maintaining fidelity to the structure of the established model. The purpose of insuring fidelity is to maintain an on-going commitment from all stakeholders and participants in the operation of the model which will ultimately ensure progress in changing children's lives, enabling a better quality of life which is the model's objective, and the objective of all Juvenile Court Systems in their responsibility to the juvenile population they serve. The sustainability of the model's operation is achieved by the over-arching participation of Judicial leadership. The Court itself is in the best position to review progress, insure the partnership of the Systems and maintain the commitment of the stakeholders while recognizing through Court proceedings the direction, progress, and the level of successful outcomes.

2. Model Sustainability

Sustainability of the Crossover Model rests upon the measuring of outcomes to determine whether the execution of the model which is in place is meeting the objectives set forth. Critical in the measuring of outcomes is the collection of data which takes on a number of forms dependent upon the structure of the existing model in that particular jurisdiction and the specific goals which are set forth to be achieved. The collection of data works to gauge the progress in various areas of the model's operation which the jurisdiction determines needs to be examined. An example of this approach in the Allegheny County Juvenile Court jurisdiction includes segregated data to specifically address the critical objective of reducing disproportionate minority contact in the Juvenile Justice and the Child Welfare Systems. The point of intersection for the juvenile population active in the model's participation is the point in history where the juvenile crosses over from Child Welfare to the Juvenile Justice System. The focal point of this intersect is vital in creating a positive direction through communication and collaboration. It also helps to understand prevalent needs of the child with regard to those juveniles already active in the Juvenile Justice System. Prior appearances before the Court and prior history with Child Welfare involvement is highly relevant data. Software systems can be modified or constructed for the collection of such data, which then can be examined by system stakeholders. Such data can show the level of progress for the dually active child population and can lead to increasing efficiency in operation of the model.

3. Needs-based System Culture

When changes are made which impact the operation and culture of a needs-based system, and in this case with the operation of a model of this nature, there is at times a resistance to change. Judicial leadership and commitment of the stakeholders will tend to lessen this resistance and there is persuasive value built into this model which will reduce the resistance factor and raise the stakeholders' desire for contribution and commitment in the systems' partners. The persuasive value is premised upon, that once the model is in operation, the stakeholders are able to observe, that as a result of the system requiring a shared case management approach, it is less burdensome to each independent system, and in addition the systems are able to observe

the progress of the children as a result of their investment. The system partners will come to see each other as allies, and there should be less stress on the funding aspects of addressing the child's needs. By both system partners participating in the care of the children in this population, the stakeholders will observe the cases as being more manageable, the status of the children improving, and a child's progress in the direction of the child's socialization will be reaching positive levels. As much as we recognize the function and obligation that necessitates Child Welfare's role in a Constitutional society which cares for those at the on-set of their lives, our system of Juvenile Justice has evolved to preempt the Child Welfare System because its very nature is for that system to address the criminogenic needs of children and contribute to the overall community safety protections that are expected. Therefore, it is important to note that the Crossover Youth Practice Model is probation driven. Juvenile Justice through Juvenile Probation is the system's partner which takes the lead in establishing this model to the extent of insuring that Juvenile Justice objectives are met to reduce juvenile offending and produce responsible adults citizens.

IV. Conclusion

In the United States, the CYMP model has been operating in 103 counties in over 21 States according to resources and information from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. These sites have been developed based on a number of criteria taking into account demographics, crime rate/crossover data and the result of a number of jurisdictions choosing to adopt the design of this model to meet the needs and achieve the objectives for the population that the jurisdiction serves. As much as the counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania practice variations of a shared-case management approach to bring together both Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare in furtherance of addressing a child's needs, some version of the Crossover Youth Practice Model, as in some jurisdictions outside of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is being utilized by various local Court systems in Pennsylvania. The two (2) largest counties, namely Philadelphia County and Allegheny County, utilize a tailored and applicable design of the Crossover Youth Practice model as Judges and stakeholders in these counties have been

formally trained and obtained certifications through the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University.

The structure, design and particulars of the Crossover Youth Practice Model developed by Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and all related information including Evidence-Based Research Studies and the Procedure for Technical Assistance is available at their website: www.cjjr.georgetown.edu. This website not only provides information but additional links for purposes of permanent documents, studies, the opportunity for webinars on various topics included in this CYPM, data and outcome analysis. The aforesited website can also provide information concerning the CYPM Aggregate Data Efforts that has been utilized by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform in furtherance of these efforts and in advancing the CYPM application. A resource report utilized and considered by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform which was the result of Federal funding provided by the US Department of Justice and was prepared in 2018 by the authors Denise C. Herz, PhD and Carly B. Dierkhising, PhD, and information from this study provided in part the following:

- The most common positive outcomes showed that youth targeted by CYPM efforts were less likely to recidivate as measured by receiving a new petition within nine (9) months of being identified as a dual status youth in 52.6% of participating jurisdictions.
- Similarly, youth in 47.4% of jurisdictions increased their connections to prosocial activities during the nine (9) month tracking period.
- Approximately, a third of all jurisdictions showed positive outcomes. Specifically, they had a reduction in the use of pre-adjudication detention; behavior problems; academic problems; mental health and substance abuse issues, and fewer arrests. Conversely, these sites also experienced an increase in the use of diversion and in the dismissal of cases. A quarter of sites also showed an increase in the use of permanent living situations and school enrollment/graduation.

In summation, by bringing together the work of both systems' partners, Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare, and the nature of their goals respectively, it is obvious that the CYPM is a positive step towards not only meeting the needs of children involved with the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems but also towards strengthening society.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men"

-Frederick Douglas

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