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Program Evaluation

WV Teen Court Implementation Training Seminar

Charleston, WV
November 20-21, 2008

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Key Principles

- Youth court programs will get what they measure.
- Evaluation is essential for program accountability
- Evaluation is ongoing and should be used to guide program improvements and modifications

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Purpose of Evaluation

- Holds programs accountable
- Creates a learning environment and contributes to program growth
- Highlights positive outcomes, uncovers ineffective practices, guides agencies to explore alternative methods for achieving program goals
- Improves capacity to demonstrate results and compete for support

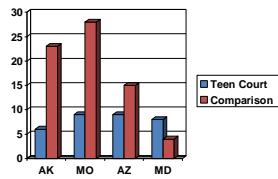
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National Evaluation

- Conducted by the Urban Institute
- Funded by OJJDP
- Results released April 2002
- Four sites studied:
 - Rockville, Maryland
 - Independence, Missouri
 - Anchorage, Alaska
 - Tempe, Arizona

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Evaluation on Teen Courts Project
Final Recidivism Results



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Six Month Recidivism

These findings suggest that teen court may be a viable alternative to the typical juvenile justice process...

...especially in jurisdictions that are unable to provide extensive interventions for young, first-time juvenile offenders

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Six Month Recidivism

- Moreover even in jurisdictions that do have a wide range of interventions for young, first time offenders...

...teen courts may be a cost effective option since they spend largely on volunteers and have small operating budgets

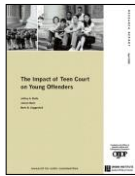
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Implications

- Recidivism is low among teen court cases partly due to factors existing before teen court.
- Teen court may be a viable option for cases not likely to receive meaningful sanctions from the regular juvenile justice system.
- Client satisfaction is very high among youth and parents even after teen court sanctioning
- No clear evidence that one courtroom model is best but youth run models deserve wider consideration

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Final Report Available



The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders

Link to the publication from www.youthcourt.net

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Recidivism

- Respect its limitations but do not ignore!
- Determine definition
- Report statistic with definition
- Balance recidivism with other outcome measures

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What Should Youth Courts Measure?

- Process Measures
 - is the program being implemented or operating according to specifications?
 - What did the program do?
- Outcome Measures
 - What are the program's immediate, intermediate, and ultimate effects?
 - What effect did the program have?

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Process Measure Example

Task: Community Service

Objective: All referrals must be ordered community service.

Process Measure: % of referrals ordered community service

Data Elements: Number of referrals, Number ordered community service

Formula: $\frac{\text{Number of referrals ordered community service}}{\text{Number of sentenced referrals within time period}}$

Example: There were 100 referrals who were sentenced during a six month period. 95 referrals were ordered to complete community service.

$\frac{95 \text{ ordered to complete community service}}{100 \text{ referrals in a six month period}} \times 100 = 95\%$

The compliance rate for community service referral is 95%

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Outcome Measure Example

Task: Community Service

Objective: 90% of respondents ordered to perform community service hours must complete their obligation before being terminated from the program.

Outcome Measure: Percentage of offenders completing their ordered community service hours.

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Outcome Measure Example (cont.)

Data Elements: Number of Discharges, Date of Discharge, Number of Hours Ordered, Number of Hours Completed

Formula: $\frac{\text{Number of offenders discharged from the program that completed their community hours}}{\text{Number of offenders discharged from program}} \times 100$

Example: There were 50 respondents who were discharged from the program. 40 respondents completed their community service hours.

40 respondents completed their hours
50 respondents have been discharged from the program X 100 = 80%
80% of referrals complete their community service hours

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Evaluation Plan

- Involve stakeholders
 - consider an evaluation task force
- Determine research questions
 - process and outcome
 - balance desire for information with feasibility
- Determine evaluation method(s)
 - time and cost
 - In house v. outside evaluator


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Evaluation Plan

- Data collection
 - Determine data elements
 - Establish methods of data collection early
 - Gather qualitative and quantitative data
 - Form partnerships and collaborative relationships with outside agencies

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Resources to Help

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- Peer Justice and Youth Empowerment: An Implementation Guide for Teen Court Programs (ch. 10)
 - National Youth Court Guidelines (ch. 10)
 - Audio Teleconference—Making Evaluation for Youth Court Simpler Using Performance-Based Measures
(access by clicking on the "Online Training" button at www.youthcourt.net)
