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Effective Components of Community-Based Programming for Justice-Involved Youth and Recidivism Analysis of the GROW Program

Prepared in partnership with
Neighborhood House

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Executive Summary

Part 1

Goals and Objectives: The goal for part 1 of this project was to conduct a literature review that gathered information on community-based programs for justice-involved youth, the methods and interventions that were used, and the impacts programs had on recidivism. Particularly, the goal was to identify the most effective components of community-based programs to prevent future recidivism for youth. The literature review also sought to gather information on programs that utilized a positive youth justice and social justice youth development lens. The information found in the literature is intended to help improve Neighborhood House’s programming for justice-involved youth.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

- **Attend to the specific risks and needs of youth:** Programs that targeted the specific needs of youth showed greater reductions in recidivism.
- **Tailor hours and duration to the needs of the specific youth:** Individualizing dosage of services was found to be an important contributor to improved outcomes when working with youth with different risk and need profiles.
- **Encourage full participation and retention of youth in programming:** Youth that received a higher dosage of programming, completed programming, and stayed even longer beyond mandated requirements, showed lower rates of recidivism and more positive outcomes.
- **Use a multiservice approach:** Programs that used a combination of intervention types and settings were found to be some of the most effective at reducing recidivism.
- **Implement effective intervention types:** Behavior-oriented, family, mentoring, employment, vocational, creative arts, and community engagement were found to be some of the most effective interventions for working with youth to prevent recidivism.
- **Encourage youth action and voice:** Fostering youths’ critical analysis of oppression and introducing ways for youth to act on injustices they experience is a promising approach to improving outcomes for justice-involved youth.
- **Ensure the programming and staff are of high quality:** Programming that was of higher quality was found to have greater impacts on recidivism. Staff competency was also related to youths’ recidivism, with incompetent staff producing negative impacts on youth recidivism.
- **Attend to the gender-specific needs of youth**

Part 2

Goals and Objectives: The goal of the second portion of this report was to determine if the young women who participated in the GROW program at Neighborhood House recidivated at lower rates or on less severe charges than a comparison group of young women on probation within 6 months and 12 months following exit from the program. With the assistance of Ramsey County Community Corrections (RCCC), a comparison group was created and data regarding the participants' recidivism and profiles were obtained. The information gathered from this analysis is intended to assist Neighborhood House in understanding the overall profiles and offense patterns of the young women they served from 2012-2016 in comparison to similar young women on probation in Ramsey County, MN.

Key findings:

- **Dominant GROW participant characteristics**
 - 71% were Black or African American
 - 51% were 15 or 16 years old when they exited programming
 - 51% had a medium YLS/CMI risk level
 - 73% were in GROW due to a delinquency offense
- **GROW vs Comparison Group Recidivism Overall**
 - Participants were found to have recidivated at similar rates overall, but were slightly less likely than the comparison group to have recidivated on serious offenses.
 - 6 months – overall offenses. GROW 15% vs Comparison 18.1%
 - 12 months – overall offenses. GROW 25.3% vs Comparison 25%
 - 6 months – serious offenses. GROW 3.8% vs Comparison 10%
 - 12 months – serious offenses. GROW 10% vs Comparison 15.6%
- **GROW vs Comparison Group Recidivism by characteristics**
 - **Race:** Black or African American GROW participants were slightly less likely to have recidivated on serious charges than those on the comparison group.
 - **Age:** GROW participants who were 15-16 years old at program exit were the least likely to have recidivated among the age groups for overall recidivism. They were also less likely to have recidivated than similarly aged youth in the comparison groups for all recidivism points.
 - **Offense Profile:** GROW participants that were in the program on status offenses did not recidivate at any point. Similar youth in the comparison group did recidivate and the majority did so on serious offenses.

**Part 1. Literature Review: Effective Components of
Community-Based Interventions for Justice-Involved Youth**

Introduction

Examining the best practices within the juvenile justice system to reduce recidivism and promote positive outcomes for youth is a complex endeavor. There are a significant number of programs and practices that have been developed over the years to try and remedy the issue of youth offending and reduce future system involvement with varying degrees of success. Additionally, there have been cultural shifts in the U.S. on how to effectively work with youth, moving from a “tough on crime” punishment model, to a focus on treatment and rehabilitation, to a current interest in community-based practices and prevention efforts (Abrams, 2013).

There is a no “one size fits all” approach to working with justice-involved youth, which is important to consider when developing programming and engaging in activities. Youth have significant variations in their personal histories and environmental influences, which impact their development. Numerous factors are related to youth becoming involved in the system and can range from individual aspects, family and community factors, to system level practices, as well as larger societal issues regarding economics, racism, and systems of disadvantage. When discussing youth who have come in to contact with the juvenile justice system, it is important to place them relative to their societal context and position within society to provide them with the most appropriate services to promote success.

This literature review focuses on community-based programs for youth involved in the juvenile justice system within the context of juvenile justice efforts overall. Specifically, it examines currently available literature surrounding the most effective practices for youth involved in the justice system and youth in community-based programs who remain in their homes. It explores the effectiveness of various programs in reducing youth recidivism. A focus is paid to efforts that go beyond providing treatment or rehabilitative programming to those that operate with a positive youth development and social justice lens. Additionally, gender-specific programs for young women are discussed.

Justice-Involved Youth Characteristics

In the U.S. nearly 3 out of 5 children experienced at least one form of violence in the prior year including physical assault, sexual victimization, maltreatment, property victimization, and witnessing violence, with more than half reporting more than one exposure. Additionally, 1 out of 6 children reportedly experienced 6 or more forms of direct violence within the past year (Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, Hamby, & Kracke, 2015).

Among youth in juvenile detention, these rates can be even higher, as it has been found that over 92% of these youths have experienced at least one traumatic event, with 84% reporting more than one and roughly 57% exposed 6 or more times (Abram et al., 2013). Additionally, they have been found to have experienced an average of 2.6 adverse childhood experiences (Wolff, Baglivio, & Piquero, 2017).

Children who are exposed to violence have been found to be more likely to experience a variety of negative consequences including behavior and mental health issues, problems in school, substance abuse, and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Finkelhor et al., 2015).

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system experience higher rates of mental health conditions, 60-65% of youth in detention have been found to experience at least one mental health disorder and 35% of youth on probation or in family court had a disorder, compared to roughly 15% of those in the community (Wasserman, McReynolds, Schwalbe, Keating, & Jones, 2010). Additionally, mental health disorders during childhood have been found to predict patterns of offending (Copeland, Miller-Johnson, Keeler, Angold, & Costello, 2007).

Many youths who come into contact with the juvenile justice system are from households of disadvantage characterized by low socioeconomic status, single-parent homes, negative family relationships, instability, conflict, or lack of adequate support or supervision, which have been shown to impact offending (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001). Additionally, navigating developmental transitions and life events can be even more difficult for youth with histories of abuse or violence. These youth also often live in disadvantaged communities, which increases their chance for violent or at risk behavior due to the influence of community and family social capital (De Coster, Heimer, & Wittrock, 2006).

However, youth with protective factors such as family support, community resources, and individual qualities such as mild temperament have been found to be able to navigate risk and exposure to violence more effectively (Jain & Cohen, 2013). Additionally, positive and supporting relationships in a variety of contexts and connections to the community can foster healthy development among at-risk youth (Developmental Services Group, Inc, 2014b).

Demographic characteristics such as race also place heavy influence on the potential for involvement in the juvenile justice system. Similar to the adult population, black youth are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system, representing 33% of the delinquency caseload but 16% of the juvenile population in 2010 (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2014). This is a result of a variety of factors including having higher risks and needs, differential treatment in regards to race, police

practices, residing in highly policed neighborhoods, among others (Developmental Services Group, Inc, 2014a).

Justice-Involved Youth Recidivism

When juvenile justice involvement is analyzed overall, there are various characteristics and instances that can increase the likelihood of recidivism among youth. The following characteristics were found during the process of this literature review; however, this is only a small portion of available research regarding juvenile recidivism.

There are various demographic characteristics such as age, race, and gender that have been found to be correlated with recidivism as well as transitioning to a more restrictive placement within the juvenile justice system. Youth who become officially involved in the justice system at a younger age experience increased risk of recidivism than those who enter at a later age. White youth are less likely to be found to recidivate in comparison to other races, they have been found to have a longer time span until a new offense, and are less likely to transition to a more restrictive placement. Additionally, females are often less likely to re-offend than males (Bontrager Ryon, Winokur Early, Hand, & Chapman, 2013; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011; Wolff et al., 2017).

How youth are processed in the juvenile justice system can impact recidivism. Youth placed in residential placements experience higher rates of recidivism in comparison to youth who serve their sentences through probation alone (58% vs. 42%) as well as have lower rates of program completion (Bontrager Ryon et al., 2013; Cohen & Piquero, 2010; Lockwood & Harris, 2015). Beyond recidivism, youth confinement has been found to have other negative consequences such as exacerbating trauma and encouraging delinquency itself through peer associations and exposure to delinquent behaviors (Bonnie & Chemers, 2013; Nguyen, Loughran, Paternoster, Fagan, & Piquero, 2017).

Risk levels have been found to be correlated with recidivism. Traditional interventions, as well as diversion interventions for higher risk juveniles, have been found to be more effective in reducing recidivism than interventions for low-risk juveniles as they have been found to be less likely to recidivate to begin with (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Dembo et al., 2008; Howell & Lipsey, 2012; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). However, the reductions in recidivism for higher risk juveniles can be slightly offset if juveniles have aggressive and violent histories (Lipsey, 2009).

Behavioral traits and violence histories have been shown to influence recidivism. Youth involved in the juvenile justice system with higher levels of antisocial and anger mismanagement and aggressive and

violent histories are more likely to re-offend than those with lower levels (Balkin, Miller, Ricard, Garcia, & Lancaster, 2011; Lipsey, 2009). They are also less likely to complete community-based programming, particularly if they had ADD/ADHD, and social skill deficits (Loeb, Waung, & Sheeran, 2015). Additionally, higher rates of adverse childhood experiences among youth predict reoffending at a quicker rate than those with lower rates (Wolff et al., 2017).

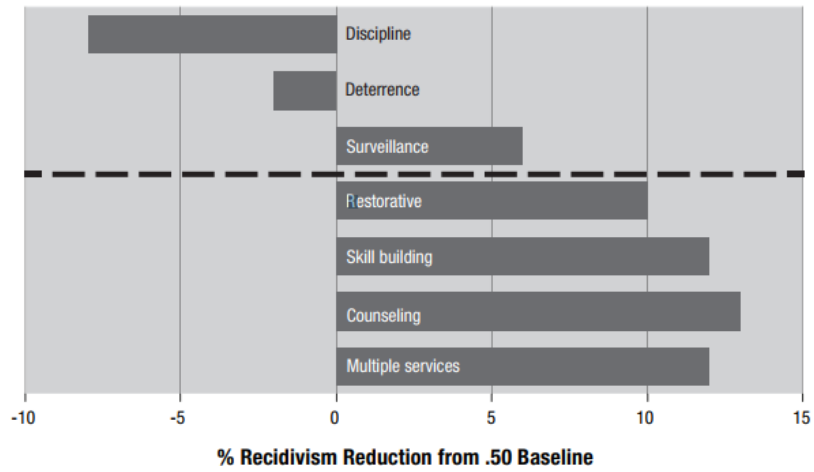
Family factors can be associated with recidivism. Lower levels of parental support for youth on probation are associated with higher levels of delinquent violations and having mothers with mental health issues impacts program completion (Loeb et al., 2015; Vidal & Woolard, 2017). Family instability and lack of positive supports and supervision also increase the likelihood of recidivism (Cottle et al., 2001).

This overview of correlates with recidivism demonstrates that there are many factors in the lives of youth and their histories that influence recidivism. How those factors manifest themselves in each youth can vary considerably. Therefore, complicating the task of working with youth effectively.

Juvenile Justice Programs Overall – Effective Components

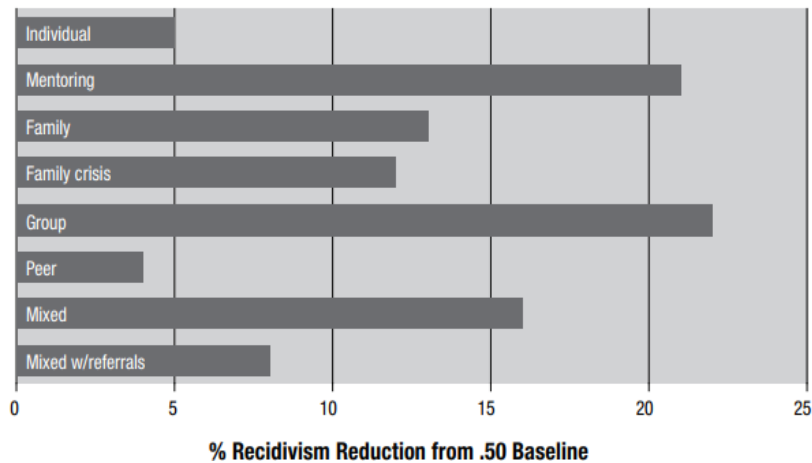
Despite the factors that have been shown to increase recidivism, there are a significant number of intervention methods and practices for working with youth in the juvenile justice system in various settings. Although there is significant variation between programs, there is evidence to support some programs being more effective than others in terms of reducing recidivism. A leader in juvenile justice research, Mark Lipsey, conducted a meta-analysis of over 500 studies, that paid particular attention to more generic programs (rather than model programs such as MST, FFT etc.). He found that programs with a therapeutic component, such as restorative, skill building, counseling, and multiple services, to be more effective than disciplinary or deterrence methods, with counseling having the greatest reductions in recidivism and skill-building and multi-service tied for second (Lipsey, 2009). Figure 1. Created by Lipsey, Howell, Kelly, Chapman, and Carver (2010) graphically represents the reductions in recidivism.

Figure 1. Mean recidivism effects for the program categories representing control and therapeutic philosophies



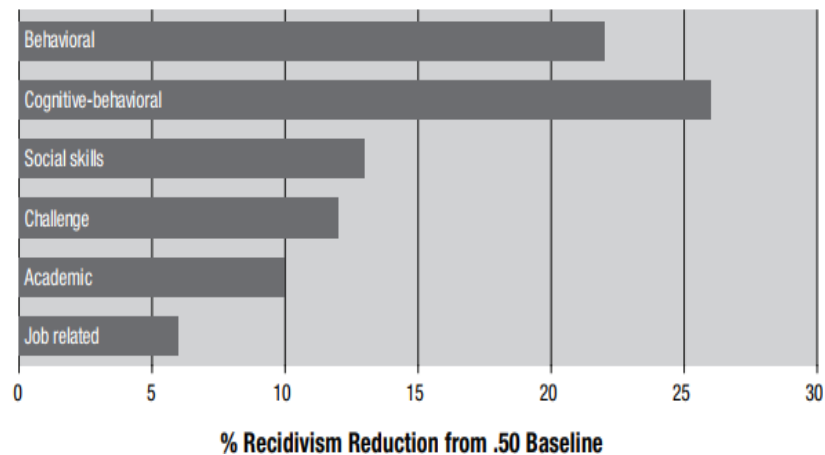
For counseling approaches, group counseling led by a therapist was the most effective with mentoring by a volunteer or paraprofessional coming in second and mixed counseling methods third among individual counseling, family counseling, short-term family crisis counseling, and peer programs (Lipsey, 2009). Figure 2. Created by Lipsey et al. (2010) graphically presents these findings.

Figure 2. Mean recidivism effects for the generic program types within the counseling category



When skill-building approaches were analyzed, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and behavioral approaches provided the greatest reduction in recidivism rates. Behavioral programs (contingency contracting, behavior management, or token economies- those that reward specific behaviors) were among the most effective skill-building programs, following were social skills training, challenge programs, academic training, and job-related interventions (Lipsey, 2009). Figure 3. Created by Lipsey et al. (2010) graphically presents these findings.

Figure 3. Mean recidivism effects for the generic program types within the skill-building category



Higher quality interventions showed the greatest reductions in recidivism. The high-quality interventions were those with the researcher involved in implementation and studies that did not report problems of program implementation (Lipsey, 2009).

Additionally, longer service duration and greater contact hours were associated with lower rates of recidivism, however, the appropriate thresholds were not defined. Interventions were found to be relatively equally effective with respect to age, gender and minorities and whites (Lipsey, 2009).

Lipsey (2009) notes that a treatment type is likely to remain similarly effective across various program/supervision contexts when controlling for risk level and individual characteristics. However, this does not mean that outcomes will be the same among supervision types as there are other negative consequences of confinement. An exception to this is that skill building programs as prevention efforts can be slightly more effective when provided in a community-based setting.

A later meta-analysis of 21 high-quality studies (those being able to isolate service impact) was conducted. This analysis also found therapeutic interventions to be effective in reducing recidivism in comparison to usual court services. The therapeutic services utilized strength-based perspectives and

the subtypes were counseling services and multiple services. This included skill-building activities, family approaches, as well as youth empowerment. More specific information regarding what these approaches entailed was not provided. The authors concluded that counseling in multiple dimensions and providing multiple services are most effective. However, this analysis was partly based on analyses of model programs due to the exclusion of less robust studies (Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2014).

In an analysis of 374 studies, the authors tested the effects of treatment vs criminal justice sanctions and found that treatment interventions (those that had any human services component) were more effective at reducing recidivism than criminal justice sanctions or punishment based policies. A 12% difference in recidivism between the service types was found (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

An analysis of research-based programs including Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Multi-systemic Therapy (MST), and Interagency coordination found that overall these programs reduced recidivism 18-month follow-up in comparison to a risk-matched control group. However, when the analysis included counselor competence, recidivism rates were lower when delivered by a competent counselor, and incompetent counselors were found to increase the likelihood of re-offense. Exactly how they defined competent counselor was not identified. This finding demonstrates that it is potentially not the necessarily the specific programming that is provided to youth, but how well it is implemented (Barnoski, 2004).

Programs that attend to risk have been found to be some of the most effective approaches to working with youth. Programs that fully adhere to the Risk-Need-Responsivity model have been shown to reduce recidivism by up to 35%. The model focuses on three principles (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

1. Risk (who): Intensive services should be targeted to higher risk offenders as research finds that higher risk offenders can benefit more from programming.
2. Need (what): Target individual criminogenic needs through programming (ex. attitudes, antisocial behaviors, educational achievement, family, substance misuse).
3. Responsivity: Provide programming in a style and mode that is responsive to the offender's learning ability and style. Place a particular focus on cognitive behavioral programs and those that adapt to an individual's specific needs.

Additionally, it has been noted that comprehensive programs for juvenile offenders that target multiple risk factors work best in reducing future delinquency (Zahn et al., 2009).

Within juvenile justice system programming overall, it has been found that therapeutic approaches to programming are more effective than disciplinary practices or criminal justice sanctions. Particularly, those that are responsive to a youth's individual risks and those that use multiple services, CBT, behavioral approaches, mentoring, or group counseling have been found to be the most promising approaches for reducing recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2014; Lipsey, 2009; Zahn et al., 2009). Additionally, the length and dosage of service received, as well as counselor competency can play a strong influential factor in reducing recidivism (Barnoski, 2004; Lipsey, 2009).

Community-Based Programs - Background

Juvenile justice practices have been shifting away from residential out of home placement to various alternative treatment and diversion methods including local or community-based initiatives for youth to receive services. There are various types of local or community-based programs, including those carried out within the justice system (probation departments) and those that are delivered directly within the community (local community organizations) (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). The following sections of this literature review focus on programs that are delivered in a community setting, where youth receive services outside of probation departments either entirely or in connections with probation departments, and are still living in their homes.

Many of these programs are referred to as diversion programs, which are programs intended to prevent youth from becoming further involved in the justice system. They can occur for youth who have been formally charged with a crime and diverted from incarceration, those who have come in contact with the justice system and have not been formally charged, and those who are at high risk of becoming involved in the system. Formal involvement in the system has shown to further exacerbate issues for youth, therefore, community-based efforts have been receiving increased attention (Bonnie & Chemers, 2013). This analysis examines community-based programs for youth who have come into contact with the justice system, who either received a formal charge or were diverted to a program as a condition of their sentence. It also analyzes program components and how they relate to recidivism.

Many innovative approaches to divert youth from further system involvement and reduce incarceration have been implemented over recent years. Many are often state or city-wide initiatives that involve various stakeholders within the community to improve outcomes for youth. These approaches can include police, probation officers, and community organizations. These initiatives have shown success in diverting youth from the system as well as producing positive outcomes for higher risk juveniles. However, when these initiatives are evaluated, they are limited to reductions in crime or recidivism

overall. From the observation of this literature review, evaluations rarely analyze specific community programs in these efforts and what components of these programs are most beneficial under what specific conditions.

However, despite this gap research availability, many studies have found that community-based services can be more effective at reducing recidivism than residential commitments or conventional interventions as well as more cost-effective (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Bontrager Ryon et al., 2013; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Additionally, placement in more intensive forms of community supervision in comparison to diversion programs can lead to quicker rates of re-arrest (Wolff et al., 2017). Research also finds that prevention programs that are carried out in an individual's environment can be more effective at reducing delinquency than prevention programs carried out in a justice system setting (De Vries et al., 2015).

Not only is participation in community-based programs proven to be more effective for justice-involved youth, but proper completion of community-based programs is significantly related to reductions in recidivism rates (Cohen & Piquero, 2010; Dembo et al., 2008; Loeb et al., 2015; Myers et al., 2000). Additionally, voluntarily dropping out of community based programming leads to increased likelihood of recidivism on drug (52% greater odds) and property (48% greater odds) offenses, and being expelled from programming increases likelihood of violent recidivism (63% greater odds) in comparison to completing programs (Lockwood & Harris, 2015).

Community-Based Programs - Recidivism

A variety of community-based intervention types have been evaluated and have shown effectiveness in reducing recidivism rates or delinquent behavior. However, there are various degrees of effectiveness in reducing recidivism. Below are programs that have demonstrated overall effectiveness in reducing recidivism.

Among youth who completed a community-based 7-week early intervention program, 35% of youth had a re-offense within 2 years. The program involved group and individual counseling that was focused on academic and career guidance, anger management, conflict management, and family counseling. Those who had high rates of antisocial behavior and anger mismanagement were more likely to re-offend. Majority of this sample was Latino and included both males and females (Balkin et al., 2011).

An analysis of a small program, Project Back on Track, used a multimodal approach to service delivery. The analysis found that 10% of youth who completed the program reoffended within 12 months in comparison to 33% of those in the control group. Those who did not complete the full program had

similar recidivism rates to those in the control group. The program targeted early offenders (either first or second offense) and the majority were violent offenders. A little over half were females and roughly half were Black or African American. It was a 4-week program where students met 4 days a week for 2 hours after school, totaling 32 hours. A parent was required to participate in 15 hours of the program. The program used a variety of treatment interventions, including group activities that worked on stress and anger management, communication, self-esteem, diversity awareness, community service projects, AODA education. The program also implemented multi-family parent-child groups that discussed life skills, stress management, and value systems, as well as parenting groups that discussed parenting styles and engagement. The program used Active Parenting curriculum. Services were administered at a health science center's child and adolescent psychiatry clinic. Services were provided by a variety of individuals from multiple disciplines including social work, psychology, etc. (Myers et al., 2000).

Court-referred delinquent youth that were primarily Latino were significantly less likely to re-offend in comparison to a control group when provided group community counseling services at a university center that utilized graduate students as service providers. The program served roughly half males and females and most of the youth were there for misdemeanor offenses. The control group consisted of youth participating in a different community-based probationary program, but the type of program was not specified. 40% of the treatment group reoffended within 2 years in comparison to 54% of control group. The group focused on providing psychoeducational counseling. Services focused on life skills, including identifying feelings, triggers to anger and other feelings/emotions, healthy coping skills, stress management, healthy communication, familial patterns, building self-esteem, and substance abuse. (Lancaster, Balkin, Garcia, & Valarezo, 2011)

A diversion program located at a Family Resource Center that offered services for first time nonviolent offenders found that 11% of those who received programming offended within one year after receiving the program. The sample included 161 youth and included both males and females and majority were white. The youth participated in comprehensive programming and each youth had a case manager that worked with the family on an individualized case plan for services and dates of completion. The youth were also assigned an adult mentor. The program offered case management, social support (promoting positive social connections and relationships, promoting community ties), family services, educational services, mentoring, and community policing (Loeb et al., 2015).

In an analysis of youth who participated in the Post-Arrest Diversion Program (PAD) in Florida, those who completed the program were arrested and charged with an offense at a rate of 15% within 12

months, in comparison to 33% of those who failed to complete the program. The program was available to first time nonviolent offenders as an alternative to residential placement. The program served both males and females, with a little over half being males and served mostly Hispanic and African American youth. Youth were screened in terms of risk level as well as psychological problems and were then referred to appropriate community-based services. They also received case management from PAD. The community-based services included services such as counseling, educational assistance, youth and family treatment, etc. Those who scored low on risk scales could complete programming within 90 days and those with higher scores could remain in the program for 1 year or more. Low-risk offenders were more likely to complete programming than moderate risk offenders. Additionally, when risk level, sociodemographic characteristics, and arrest/charge type were controlled for, completion of PAD significantly reduced the likelihood of further arrests (Dembo et al., 2008).

The Targeted (RECLAIM) initiative, a subset of the wider RECLAIM initiative in the State of Ohio, attempted to reduce the risk of recidivism by serving more youth locally in community-based services, instead of in secure facilities. The program served youth who were majority non-white and were moderate and high-risk offenders. The recidivism rate was 11.3% for those who participated in programs vs 25% for the matched youth who were released from the Ohio Department of Youth Services custody. Recidivism was defined as a subsequent incarceration for any reason, not necessarily a new charge or violation. However, the programs that the RECLAIM initiative used were model programs such as thinking for change (TFC), Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST), etc. (Schweitzer, Labrecque, & Smith, 2017).

Additionally, another study found that offending youth who completed community-based programs as an alternative to placement had a re-offense rate of 40% overall within one year, although there were no specifics regarding services provided (Wolff et al., 2017).

Of the studies included in this section, recidivism rates for the treatment groups ranged from 10-40%. Whereas, the recidivism rates for control or non-completion groups ranged from 25-54%, although some programs used dates for recidivism other than a 12-month follow-up as well as different definitions of recidivism. Therefore, there was a high degree of variability in recidivism rates across interventions, as well as variability in the services provided regarding length, delivery mode, geographic location, youth characteristics, among others. This variability was noted by many of the authors of articles in this analysis as a component which makes community-based programs difficult to evaluate. However, studies that reported offense rates between 10-15% in the treatment group had

individualized case or treatment plans, were reserved for both violent and nonviolent early offenders (majority nonviolent) and used multiple types of interventions including having a family component.

Community-Based Programs – Effective Components

Many community programs have shown to reduce recidivism rates. However, due to the variability in programming and participants, the rates of recidivism are mixed. Therefore, in order to provide the most beneficial services to youth, it is important to understand what program components are the most effective for reducing recidivism. The following are studies found which analyzed specific components of community-based programs that influence their effectiveness.

There were several meta-analyses or systematic reviews that assessed the most effective components of community-based practices. In an analysis of 15 systematic reviews, Gill (2016) found that there was evidence of effectiveness for community programs for at-risk youth that focus on strengthening and restoring social connections, fostering social bonds, and building supportive informal social controls. Particularly effective were the programs that engaged youth in their community as well as those that targeted specific risk factors. A meta-analysis found that for non-institutionalized serious juvenile offenders, individual counseling, interpersonal skill development, and behavioral programs appeared to be the most effective and were shown to reduce recidivism by about 40 percent (M. W. Lipsey et al., 2000).

A meta-analysis of 39 prevention programs for juveniles at risk of persistent juvenile delinquency was conducted and included programs that served both those who were at risk of formal involvement and those who were formally involved in the juvenile justice system. In comparison to receiving no treatment or care as usual, the mean reduction in recidivism among all the studies in the analysis was 13.44%. It found that programs that incorporated behavioral modeling and contracting, as well as those that had a focus on parenting skills for offender's families, had larger effects on reductions in delinquency. Behavior-oriented programs contributed to a 30% reduction in offending compared to care as usual or no treatment. When analyzing program format, those that were carried out in a family format and those that used a multimodal (combination of individual, family, and group) format showed larger effects on reoffending than those that were carried out in group settings. Program intensity was related to effectiveness, with those with the higher number of sessions being related to reduced effectiveness, indicating that high levels of service for less serious offenders is harmful. However, the point of diminishing returns was not defined. The programs in the study had anywhere from less than one to 7 sessions per week. This analysis included youth who were at the "onset of their criminal

career,” who were deemed at risk of persistent delinquency but did not include chronic offenders or those who had serious violent offenses (De Vries et al., 2015).

Another meta-analysis of 28 research studies of diversion programs compared recidivism rates of treatment and control groups in terms of program type. The studies in the analysis were of programs for youth referred by law enforcement or the juvenile justice system prior to adjudication. These program types included case management, individual treatment, family treatment, youth court, and restorative justice. Only family treatment programs included in the study were found to have statistically significant impacts on reducing recidivism rates. The programs included that were considered family treatment were interventions that were specifically family focused or interventions that provided family services along with individual services to the youths (Schwalbe et al., 2012).

Additionally, in a review of the literature, it was suggested that the most successful community-based programs in reducing crime are interventions that place an emphasis on family interactions (Greenwood, 2008). Although the review was partly based on evaluations of model programs such as MST and FFT.

Analyses of specific programs were also found. A city initiative called Measure-Y was founded in Oakland, CA to prevent violence in the community and increase public safety through coordinated services and police efforts. The initiative included violence prevention programs for juveniles throughout the community. The evaluation of the prevention programs found that the number of violent offenses decreased after participation in the program. It also found that the intensity of individual service hours and retention in group services were related to a decrease in probation violations. Retention in group service showed a statistically significant association with the total violations. Additionally, when a youth’s average number of individual service hours reached 4 hours per month there was a 53% reduction in the average number of probation violations. Program service types also produced varying results. The programs’ services ranged from case management, intensive outreach, work experience, vocational skills training, social activities, and violence prevention/anger management/conflict resolution programs. Youth who completed work experience and group vocational skill training services were least likely to receive probation violations. Services that provided social activities were approaching significance on effect on violations. Program length for Measure-Y was 3 months with 35 hours of group service and 20 hours of individual service (Bennett et al., 2010).

Although many analyses show effectiveness, an analysis of youth involved in majority community-based programs through the RECLAIM program in Ohio, found that program type such as substance abuse

treatment, probation surveillance, or diversion, etc. and program factors such as program integrity had no effect on strengthening or weakening the variance in recidivism. Individual risk level was the only indicator that had a consistent effect, with a higher risk score increasing recidivism. The programs also did not provide differing ability to strengthen or weaken the effect of individual risk on recidivism. However, adherence to best practices in program implementation and delivery was noted to slightly lessen the impact of risk. This may demonstrate that underlying risk and or individual characteristics may be more influential to recidivism, at least in this sample (Sullivan & Latessa, 2011).

Research also finds that youth that participate in community-based programs that have large client capacities are more likely to recidivate, meaning youth potentially benefit more from greater opportunities for one to one relationships or more directed services (Lockwood & Harris, 2015).

Therefore, when looking at particular components of community-based programs in the studies noted in this section, it can be argued that those that have a family component, focus on employment or vocational skills, implement behavioral techniques, and use a multimodal approach can be effective in community-based settings (Bennett et al., 2010; De Vries et al., 2015; Greenwood, 2008; M. W. Lipsey et al., 2000; Schwalbe et al., 2012). Juvenile justice program research overall says that cognitive behavioral therapy and behavioral programs, group, as well as mentoring approaches, can be the most effective (Lipsey, 2009). The risk levels of particular clients should be attended to as their effect on recidivism can be more powerful than program intervention type and being responsive to risks can produce large reductions in recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011). Additionally, it was noted that engaging youth in their communities can additionally be effective for at-risk youth (Gill, 2016).

Positive Youth Justice

Aside from rather traditional treatment programming such as behavioral techniques, counseling, case management, and others that focus on rehabilitation methods, there are programs that have shifted to a youth development model. These include programs that focus on building strengths and skills, fostering creativity and expression, and promoting involvement in prosocial activities as methods to reduce youth recidivism and further involvement in the justice system. Despite the growing trend in this type of community-based programming, there is relatively little research on the effectiveness of these community programs regarding youth recidivism and crime reduction. Positive youth development (PYD) interventions and programs are often created for low-risk youth or all youth in a community. They are not typically reserved for higher risk youth already involved in the juvenile justice system or under

court supervision. However, some programs are implementing these types of services for justice-involved youth (Butts, Bazemore, & Saa Meroe, 2010).

As noted prior, there is often a lack of research on specific community-based programs outside of a larger stakeholder context. Even rarely are studies available of community-based programs that take a positive youth development approach. However, despite the lack of studies that have evaluated these programs in terms of their reductions in recidivism for justice-involved youth, youth development programming for justice-involved youth are noted as a potentially highly influential in reducing delinquency (Butts et al., 2010). This argument is founded on prior research of the benefits of positive youth development programming for all youth and how these benefits are subsequently associated with delinquent and offending behavior. A meta-analysis and various studies note that PYD programming has been shown to increase various positive social behaviors (self-efficacy and esteem, self-control, interpersonal skills, etc.), graduation and school achievement, connections to communities, social responsibility, among many others. They have also been found to provide reductions in behaviors such as violence, pregnancy, substance use, school dropout, among others. All of which have been found to be associated with youth delinquency and offending behavior. Therefore, it is presumed that these programs have the ability to potentially influence recidivism and provide prosocial outcomes for justice-involved youth and communities (Butts et al., 2010; Developmental Services Group, Inc, 2014b).

The concept of PYD incorporated in the juvenile justice sector is coined as Positive Youth Justice (PYJ). This model recognizes youth as assets with strengths, abilities, and talents that can be capitalized on for community and individual change through engagement in effective supports and social interactions with communities. PYJ is based on two core assets for youth development, learning/doing (gaining skills and competencies, using skills, engaging in new roles and responsibilities, developing confidence and efficacy) and attaching/belonging (being an active member of prosocial groups, developing a sense of belonging, and placing high value on service to others and being connected to the larger community). It is noted that youth begin to experience greater outcomes if engaged in these core assets (Butts et al., 2010). Within the two core assets, there are six practice domains which are important in promoting positive youth justice in the figure below created by (Butts et al., 2010).

Six Practice Domains

Work

- Job experience
- Apprenticeships
- Job preparedness
- Income and independence

Education

- Literacy
- Credentials
- Learning skills
- Career planning

Relationships

- Communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Family systems
- Intimacy and support

Community

- Civic engagement
- Community leadership
- Service
- Responsibility

Health

- Physical activity
- Diet and nutrition
- Behavioral health
- Lifestyle and sexuality

Creativity

- Personal expression
- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Language arts

Additionally, how these can be incorporated and evaluated in programming are described in the following figure created by (Butts et al., 2010).

Positive Youth Justice Model

PRACTICE DOMAINS	Domain-Specific Example*	CORE ASSETS			
		Learning / Doing		Attaching / Belonging	
		Activity or Opportunity	Outcome Measures	Activity or Opportunity	Outcome Measures
Work	Job readiness	Resume writing workshop	Resume submitted to potential employer	Job-seeker support group	Frequency or length of group participation
Education	Computer skills	One-on-one skill building in HTML or other language	Youth has an operating web site	Youth-to-youth tutoring program	Number of successful tutoring matches
Relationships	Communication skills	Training in conflict management	Youth completes training program	Youth-adult mentor program	Frequency and duration of mentoring relationship
Community	Youth-led civic improvement campaign	Prepare and present formal testimony	Youth speaks at public hearing	Launch new advocacy organization	Number of meetings attended
Health	Physical Fitness	Weight training	Number of training circuits completed	Team sports	Number of games played
Creativity	Self-expression	Mural art program	At least one mural designed or completed	Group performance, music or theater	Number of performances in which youth participated

Following this discussion, below are community-based programs that have demonstrated positive justice-related outcomes that have incorporated PYJ concepts for court-involved youth or youth at risk for delinquency.

YouthBuild, a program model that is implemented across the U.S. for adolescents and young adults involved in the justice system has been found to be effective in a variety of ways. The program is focused on youth learning hands-on skills and building rehabilitative housing for low-income people, as well as working on education, engaging in counseling services, and receiving life skills and financial management training within a cohort of youth and young adults. Graduates spend an average of 12 months in the program. In an analysis of those who graduated the program in comparison to those who dropped out, program completers had lower rates of justice system involvement. Only 17% of graduates were either convicted of a crime, received a parole revocation, or were incarcerated within 18 months after leaving the program in comparison to 33% of those who dropped out of programming (Cohen & Piquero, 2010).

YouthARTS programs have been implemented in different parts of the U.S. have shown to be effective in preventing arrests for youth involved in the juvenile justice system or those at risk of juvenile justice involvement. Additionally, those who participated in the program had improved on a variety of self-reported social and skill outcomes such as communication with peers and adults, cooperation, task completion, reductions in anger expressions, as well as probation officer reported improvements in self-esteem, accomplishment, and pride. Youth were involved in art expression programs from 6-9 hours per week from 12-16 weeks, with one program providing services for 4 separate 8-12 week sessions (Clawson & Coolbaugh, 2001).

The Youth Advocates Programs are also programs that take a youth development approach to providing services to youth who were involved in the justice system or delinquent behaviors. These programs are located across the U.S. The program hires youth advocates, or adult mentors from the same zip code and pairs them with the youth. They engage in a variety of individual and group activities including but not limited to community service, playing sports, community outings (ex. museums), employment services, homework assistance, community gardening, anger management, etc. The evaluation analyzed youth and mentors' self-reports. Findings demonstrated that participation in the program led to declines in self-reported misconduct at discharge from programming. At 12 months post discharge they had less severe charges, had higher school attendance, and more secure employment. Additionally, they found that problem-focused discussions with advocates later in the match predicted higher misconduct at

discharge and play interactions at the end of the program were associated with youth reporting the lowest levels of misconduct. Which indicated that problem-focused discussions and less play early on and the opposite later were more beneficial (Karcher & Johnson, 2016).

Perhaps the most illustrative youth development program found was a juvenile justice program in the South Bronx, South Bronx Community Connections for Youth. The program used a positive youth and community development approach to divert youth from the justice system. Along with partnerships within the justice community, the program had three additional components. Positive youth development, which included treating youth as assets, building leadership, using strengths-based programming, and adult mentors within the community as supports for youth. They also focused on family engagement which included parent peer coaching and support groups, and building leadership of parents. Additionally, they focused on community engagement, which included engaging other neighborhood organizations as collaborative partners. The project included 149 juveniles, 62 in the treatment group for analysis. Majority of the youth were referred from the probation department after juvenile justice involvement to prevent deeper processing in the system. Many of the youth were required to serve a 60-day mandate for program involvement as a condition of their offense, however, participants remained in the program an average of 209 days, and those who remained for at least 90 days were the least likely to be further involved in the justice system. The treatment group had a 16% re-arrest rate compared to 23.6% in the comparison group within one year. Although it was not specified what their exact programming entailed in terms of hours, they focused on a development approach rather than treatment. The program included engaging in prosocial community activities such as neighborhood improvement projects across different organization sites. These projects included hosting a youth talent show, painting a mural to honor a community activist, organizing safe parties for teens, and cultivating an urban youth farm. Youth worked with mentors from the community who were close in age, but older, and were deemed as “credible messengers” to promote positive development. For parent activities they used the strengthening families curriculum, though, it was adapted to meet the specific needs of families. It was found that the youth who had families that were engaged in 0 activities stayed in the program for an average of 165 days, those that participated in 1-4 activities stayed in the program for an average of 205 days, and those that participated in 5 or more activities stayed for an average of 414 days (Curtis, Marcus, & Jacobs, 2013).

The programs noted in this section that reported recidivism rates had rates that were relatively low, 16% and 17%. Many of the programs used mentors to support youth development, particularly ones

from the community that the youth reside. Mentoring was found to be one of the more effective approaches for youth in the juvenile justice system within the counseling category of approaches, second behind group counseling (Lipsey, 2009). Aside from mentoring, there appeared to be smaller groups of youth and adults working alongside one another in the programs, either in community service, activities or outings, as well as art projects, which may have been a contributing factor to beneficial findings as it has been found that programs that have smaller capacities provide greater reductions in recidivism (Lockwood & Harris, 2015). Additionally, the activities may have allowed youth to build skills related to employment or vocational abilities, which have also been shown to be some of the most effective methods (Bennett et al., 2010). Therefore, approaches for positive youth justice are promising, despite the lack of literature found regarding recidivism for justice-involved youth.

Social Justice Youth Development

Beyond a positive youth justice framework, is an argument for not only building on youth's strengths and assets but creating opportunities for youth to understand and critically analyze the larger social and racial constructs in which they are situated. This concept is coined Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD), where youth begin to understand themselves and communities, and their potential and responsibility through critical awareness of self, society, racism, history, and gender. The healthy positive development of youth is hindered by oppressive structures, and urban youth of color are particularly impacted due to their political, economic, and social position in society. Therefore, promoting an understanding of power dynamics and providing opportunities for youth to challenge oppressive structures through organizing for political and social change, they begin to foster healthy development and radical healing from past trauma and injustices. It is noted that when youth are critically aware, they begin to make greater sense of their world and themselves. They are then empowered and motivated to create change within themselves and society and be engaged and feel more connected to their communities. Although this framework is not specifically targeted for justice-involved youth but urban youth of color overall, it is even more relevant given the frequency of their involvement in the juvenile justice system and their social labels as delinquents (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). This concept is also relevant to terms such as critical theory, empowerment theory, and critical consciousness. Below is a chart that outlines principles practices, and outcomes for working with youth in a SJYD context created by Ginwright and James (2002).

Table 2.1. Principles, practices, and outcomes of social justice youth development

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Analyzes power in social relationships	Political education Political strategizing Identifying power holders Reflecting about power in one's own life	Social problematizing, critical thinking, asking and answering questions related to community and social problems Development of sociopolitical awareness Youth transforming arrangements in public and private institutions by sharing power with adults
Makes identity central	Joining support groups and organizations that support identity development Reading material where one's identity is central and celebrated Critiquing stereotypes regarding one's identities	Development of pride regarding one's identity Awareness of how sociopolitical forces influence identity Feeling of being a part of something meaningful and productive The capacity to build solidarity with others who share common struggles and have shared interests
Promotes systemic social change	Working to end social inequality (such as racism and sexism) Refraining from activities and behaviors that are oppressive to others (for example, refusing to buy shoes made in sweatshops)	Sense of life purpose, empathy for the suffering of others, optimism about social change Liberation by ending various forms of social oppression
Encourages collective action	Involving oneself in collective action and strategies that challenge and change local and national systems and institutions Community organizing Rallies and marches Boycotts and hunger strikes Walkouts Electoral strategies	Capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions Empowerment and positive orientation toward life circumstances and events Healing from personal trauma brought on from oppression
Embraces youth culture	Celebrating youth culture in organizational culture Language Personnel Recruitment strategies	Authentic youth engagement Youth-run and youth-led organizations Effective recruitment strategies Effective external communications Engagement of extremely marginalized youth

Locating studies of programs that used the concepts found in this framework for justice-involved youth was especially difficult, as much of the literature is focused on more treatment and rehabilitative programming or simply PYD for youth in the justice system. Although there are programs out there, finding evaluations of them are difficult, especially in relation to recidivism or offending behavior. Below are studies found which may have relevance to youth justice programs at Neighborhood House.

Although it can be viewed as more of a traditional juvenile justice program, the Community Connections Partnership implemented an Afrocentric diversion program for nonviolent felony offending African American males that were diverted from juvenile incarceration in the state of Ohio. Youth were referred by a probation officer and the program was a voluntary alternative to traditional probation. It was included in this section due to its emphasis on providing culturally specific services and empowering the cultural identities of youth and connections to communities. The staff who worked with clients in various areas were African American. Youth received services in five core areas, weekly classes on the consequences of alcohol abuse, life skills relating to daily activities (managing money, employment), norms and standards (behavioral modification), cultural re-grounding (exposure to positive aspects of African American heritage and community responsibility), and leisure activities such as community outings and sports. The youth received services 22 times a month. A comparison group of similar youth who were on traditional probation was created for comparison. Youth who participated in the program were less likely to be adjudicated for a misdemeanor, violation, or any adjudication than those in the comparison group. On felony charges, CCP youths' adjudication rate was 31.1% in comparison to 44.4% for the comparison group. On misdemeanor charges, CCP youths' rate was 37% in comparison to 40.6% for the comparison group. However, when multivariate analyses were conducted, it was found that when controlling for other factors the differences between groups were less pronounced. However, CCP youth performed slightly better (King, Holmes, Henderson, & Latessa, 2001).

It is noted that through an analysis of interviews with offender labeled youth in a community-based program, community-based organizations can be effective counterspaces for youth to develop their identities. Counterspaces were referred to as spaces where individuals can engage in discussions that challenge dominant narratives around a minority marginalized identity. In this instance, the narrative that youth involved in the justice system are deficient, violent, or "bad." These spaces can help youth to foster positive identities within themselves and as part of a group of peers and adults, as well as make sense of the injustices they have experienced (Case & Hunter, 2014).

Building on this literature was a further analysis of a leadership development program, Peer Ambassadors (PA). The program was developed for justice-involved or at-risk African American youth ages 10-19. The youth in the program had histories of assault, drug possession, runaway, truancy, etc. The goals of the program were to reduce problem behaviors, increase prosocial behaviors, increase capacity to navigate life challenges, and foster leadership skills. The program took a youth empowerment, leadership, and community engagement approach. The program had a “learning by doing” philosophy and was youth-led. The youth developed projects and engaged in activities such as conducting focus groups with incarcerated youth to identify service gaps and needs and then presenting findings to stakeholders. The youth held town hall meetings regarding limited opportunities for youth and issues regarding high school dropout rates. Some youth participated in committees in the community for youth initiatives. They also participated in community activities such as neighborhood cleanups. Youth were compensated for their work in the form of a semimonthly stipend. Youth participated for two years. Due to the study being qualitative, there were no statistics on youth offending. However, the author noted that of the 30 youth involved in the program, some have had further contact with the juvenile justice system, but to the date of the study, none had been involved in the adult system. Additionally, it was noted that all but one participant had graduated or received their GED and over 90% had enrolled in college. Based on the interviews with participants, the author concluded that the program empowered youth and fostered skill competence (how to lead, work as a team, and advocate for needs), and built confidence (changed views of self-worth and self-efficacy), and allowed youth to contest the notion that they were “bad kids.” Supportive relationships were fostered among youth, and youth who were involved in the program for longer were viewed as positive role models for younger youth. The youth appeared to hold each other accountable and encouraged one another to succeed. Youth also noted unconditional acceptance from leaders as a beneficial characteristic of the program in building confidence (Case, 2017). The program followed the conceptual model found below created by Case (2017).

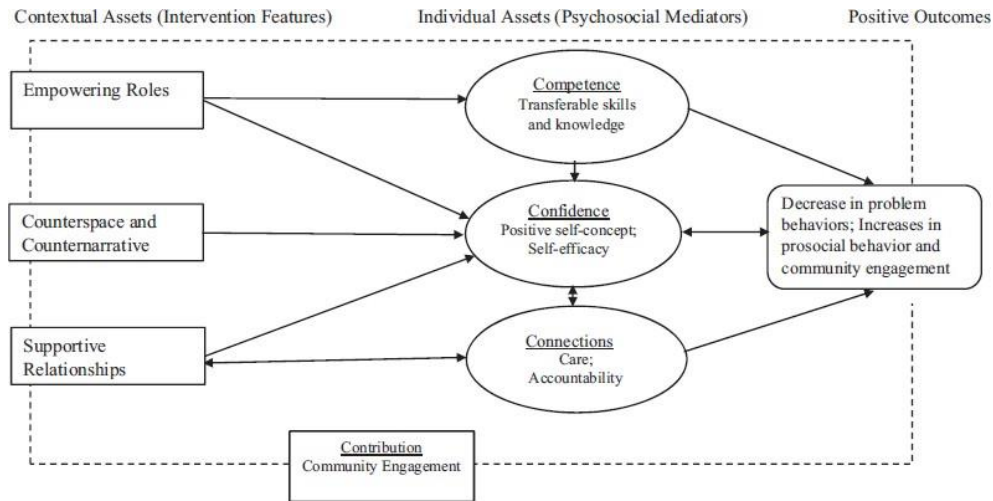


Figure 1. Critical-Positive Youth Development Model for Intervening with Minority Youth from Low-Income Urban Communities.

An additional program that engaged youth in SJYD was implemented for youth in the justice system, however, it was for incarcerated youth rather than youth on probation or those diverted from the system. The REACH program (Read Educate Attain Create Hope) was a community service partnership that brought undergraduate students into the juvenile justice hall and they worked alongside residents on a variety of topics on a semester-long project. The REACH program sought to bring liberal arts education and values into the juvenile justice system, create a space for creative expression and free thought, and build connections between incarcerated youth and young adults from “the outside.” It also sought to challenge the narratives of incarcerated youth and structural racism, as well as challenge inequalities between the students and the incarcerated youth. The youth worked together to develop solutions for fostering more equal opportunities for youth in the community. This analysis found that by the end of the program incarcerated youth noted that they saw themselves as able and inspired to help change their communities for the better. They also began to see themselves as something other than a “bad kid.” The incarcerated youth also began to see themselves as part of a larger social context and a part of a system of incarceration, rather than just an individual involved in criminal behaviors. The author noted that initially, the incarcerated youth had strong beliefs about individual choice and involvement in the justice system, which was a challenge to encourage youth to critique the structural issues they were impacted by. However, by the end of the program, these opinions often shifted as noted above. The author also noted that the program allowed the undergraduate students to critically assess justice system policies and childhood inequalities experienced by these youths. Although this

involved incarcerated youth, it is arguable that their methods could be applied to a community-based setting for juveniles to produce similar outcomes (Tilton, 2013).

During the time frame of conducting this report, the above programs were the only programs that could be identified that used SJYD approach when working with youth involved in the justice system.

However, there may be more studies available that analyze specific programming. Despite the lack of research identified for youth already involved in the system, there are a considerable number of programs across the country available to youth in general that follow SJYD concepts. In a report conducted by the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, the authors identify 16 community-based organizations implementing initiatives for youth development in the context of youth leadership and challenging structural racism through activism and community engagement. Although the report is dated, many of the programs are still in existence today (Quiroz-Martinez, HoSang, & Villarosa, 2004).

Despite the lack of specific studies or analyses of programs found, there are a few findings that may be of relevance to incorporating SJYD concepts into programs for justice-involved youth. One study of high school aged youth who were mostly low income, minority, and who lived in one of the poorest districts in the state, found that the youths' perceptions of sociopolitical control had the ability to mediate the relationship between ecological supports and risk factors and developmental outcomes. Sociopolitical control was defined as having leadership competence and policy control, which included self-perceptions of the ability to lead groups and the ability to influence policy and community decisions. Therefore, this finding demonstrates that although social supports such as family cohesion, peer relationships, school settings, etc. have a positive influence on self-esteem and perceived school importance, which influences positive developmental outcomes such as reduction in violent and risk behaviors and improved psychological symptoms, perceptions of sociopolitical control can additionally positively influence these prosocial developmental outcomes. Additionally, youth that reported higher levels of sociopolitical control had higher levels of self-esteem. Sociopolitical control was significantly correlated with risky behaviors. The authors concluded that programs to promote positive development among youth should incorporate efforts to increase youths' sociopolitical development through engaging in community change processes and efforts to improve social and political systems as this development itself improves overall positive outcomes (Christens & Peterson, 2012).

Although only one study was found that looked at recidivism rates in relation to SJYD, the studies showed slightly less recidivism (King et al., 2001) as well as many qualitative benefits that have the potential to reduce recidivism or prevent offending behavior. Youth were found to develop a sense of

identity, they were empowered and gained confidence, leadership skills, communication skills, developed a sense of social responsibility and investment in helping the community, as well as developed a more positive image of self in relation to larger societal contexts (Case, 2017; Tilton, 2013). Community centers were found to be potentially effective counterspaces for fostering this development (Case & Hunter, 2014). Additionally, it was found that a sense of sociopolitical control had the ability to mediate the relationship between environmental supports and positive developmental outcomes and risky behaviors (Christens & Peterson, 2012). Therefore, potential benefits of programs that work to develop sociopolitical control can potentially enhance benefits. Additionally, evidence suggests that political factors have the greatest influence on the implementation of community-based juvenile justice initiatives, which includes having a democratic district attorney (Cooley, 2011). Therefore, providing more reason for youth to be engaged in the social and political context of their lives.

Young Women Specific Community-Based Programs

The studies and information above focused on the juvenile justice system and community-based programs for justice-involved youth overall, some of which paid particular attention to males as they are historically more likely to be represented in the juvenile justice system (Lipsey, 2009). However, there is growing evidence to support the need for gender-specific programming and the specific needs of young women in the juvenile justice system. Scholars note that the developmental needs of justice-involved young women and their general profiles are different from those of young men. Rates of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are higher among young women and they have higher rates of involvement in the justice system due to running away from their potentially violent environments. Young women have higher instances of co-morbid mental health disorders including PTSD and depression, they pay particular attention to personal identity and perceptions of self in relation to others, as well as focus on relationships with others and how those connect to their sense of self (Developmental Services Group, Inc, 2010).

Young women often have lower recidivism rates than males and have lower offense risk profiles than males, but often are categorized as higher need. Considering their specific needs, numerous recommendations for gender-responsive programs have been developed by various authors and interest groups to work more effectively with justice-involved young women. These include a variety of interventions such as using trauma-informed and strength-based practices, fostering positive gender and cultural identity, utilizing female perspectives, empowering decision-making and voice, relational

development, among others (Kerig & Schindler, 2013). Below are studies analyzing programming specific to young women in the justice system in relation to recidivism.

A meta-analysis of gender-specific programming for young women found 62 studies that targeted delinquency, 9 of which targeted young women in the juvenile justice system and had evaluations available. The programs in the study included interventions for young women on probation as well as those who were in custody. Overall, there was mixed support for the effectiveness of the programs in reducing recidivism. However, the programs showed positive effects in terms of education, social support and relationships, self-efficacy and esteem, and other positive psychological and social outcomes (Zahn et al., 2009).

When looking at specific programs in the study, there were a few community-based programs that analyzed recidivism. The RYSE program was an initiative housed within a probation department that sought to prevent future juvenile justice involvement for adjudicated young women ages 12 to 17 who were primarily African American. The young women received a variety of programs and services either through outside community-based organizations or the probation department itself. Their treatment plans were individualized and included referrals to programs ranging from girls' groups, parenting education and pregnancy prevention, drug treatment, anger management, and family services, among others. The analysis found that the young women who completed the RYSE program were 50% more likely to complete their probation in comparison to young women who received traditional probation services. There were no significant differences in recidivism between RYSE participants and the comparison group at 6 months (14.1%, 12.8%), 12 months (25.6%, 24%), and 18 months (30.1%, 33.3%). Recidivism was defined as rearrests. However, RYSE participants were more likely to be arrested on less severe charges than the comparison group, 31.8% were arrested for felony charges in comparison to 52.3% in the comparison group. Additionally, young women who did not recidivate within 12 months were less likely to be rearrested after 12 months than those in the comparison group (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2001).

Another program, WINGS, was also implemented in a probation department as an alternative to traditional probation services. The young women involved in the programming were 12-18 years old and were defined as being minimally involved in the justice system. The youth received home visitation services and a variety of center and community-based services within community organizations. These services included a girls group that emphasized cognitive skill building and self-esteem, family group counseling, healthy lifestyles group (nutrition, sexual health, family planning, etc.) and an academic

enhancement group (training and career planning, tutoring, literacy, etc.). Program participants were said to have completed the program if they participated for a minimum of 6 months and completed their individualized case plan. The rates of recidivism were low, and not significantly different from one another, with the comparison group showing slightly higher rates. At 6 months after program completion, 4% of WINGS participants recidivated in comparison to 6% in the control group at 12 months (15% vs 11%) and 18 months (18% vs 15%). However, WINGS participants were found to have more protective factors and fewer risk factors at exit than the comparison group. They had higher rates of prosocial adult relationships, self-control, organizational involvement, and peer pressure management, and fewer risk factors such as drug use, delinquent friends, social isolation, truancy, and distressing habits, despite there being no results in regards to recidivism (Burke, Keaton, & Pennell, 2003).

An evaluation of the Girls Circle program in Cook County, Illinois was conducted to assess recidivism rates of participants against a comparison group of young women who received traditional non-gender specific probation. The Girls Circle program is a gender-specific curriculum that has been implemented in a variety of sites across the U.S. The Girls Circle program is an 8-12-week-long program for young women ages 9-18 where participants engage in 1.5-2-hour sessions with a female group facilitator weekly. The program includes 13 specific themed activities including topics such as body image, relationships, diversity, mind, body, spirit, mother-daughter circle, etc. The sessions follow a 6-step format and utilize motivational interviewing techniques as well as efforts to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors. In this sample, the program was implemented as a component of a probation department. The young women received specialized casework probation and the 10-week Girls Circle program. 11 program cohorts that served 8-10 young women each were analyzed for the study and young women were randomly assigned to the program or comparison group. Those in the comparison group had the possibility of receiving a variety of services including restitution, community service, other treatment programs, home confinement, etc. Majority of the young women were African American, with the remaining majority being Hispanic. Most of the young women had no prior arrests before attending the program. The results indicated that after receiving Girls Circle programming, participants were not significantly less likely to receive a probationary violation (21.4% vs. 33.9%) or be arrested (34.8% vs 42.9%) than those in the comparison group 12 months after program completion. Although the percentages were different, they were not statistically significant differences. Additionally, the rates of those who received petitions were identical between groups at 12.5%. However, when controlling for dosage it was found that a one-unit increase in the number of sessions was correlated with a 15.7%

reduction in the likelihood that a young woman violated probation, an 8.8% reduction in the likelihood of re-arrest, and a 9.5% reduction in any probation, arrest, or petition event. Young women who participated in the group prevented any reoffending event for slightly longer than comparison girls, 9.4 months in comparison to 8.8. Additionally, participants were not found to improve on any positive short-term outcomes including risky behaviors, psychosocial assets, school aspirations and expectations, and body image. The authors noted that 50% of the participants received less than 30% of the recommended dosage, which could have been a contributor to findings (Gies et al., 2015).

The RADIUS program for justice-involved young women in Hennepin County was also analyzed in terms of its impact on recidivism rates. The program uses a gender responsive and trauma-informed approach, seeking to help young women heal and come to terms with past trauma and life events, create healthier relationships and positive assets, and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Successful completion of the program included participating in 10 to 12 group sessions, one restorative justice talking circle, and at least 10 individual counseling and case management sessions with staff. The majority of the young women were nonwhite and non-Asian and 75% were medium-risk or higher. The young women were referred to the program from the Hennepin County Department of Corrections after they were placed on supervision. A comparison group was comprised of young women on probation who also received community-based services to determine the impacts of RADIUS in comparison to other community-based programs. The analysis found that participants that had more encounters with the program were less likely to have a recidivism event, a reoffense, or an out of home placement within one year following program start date in comparison to less active participants. The participants that had no future contact with the justice system had an average of 20 total encounters with the program. Participants that attended more than 10 individual sessions, more than 10 group sessions, and engaged in at least one circle session were less likely to have an out of home placement. In comparison to those who did not participate in a circle, those who did were 20% less likely to have a re-offense (33% vs. 53%). When looking at RADIUS participant's justice involvement against those in the comparison group, RADIUS participants appeared to have higher rates of recidivism (46% vs 36%) and re-offense (41% vs 31%), but lower rates of out of home placement (18% vs 27%) within one year from the program start date, although the differences were not statistically significant. The analysis also identified qualitative benefits to participants and their families in regards to relationship building with other youth, healthy relationships, family relationships, and communication skills (Atella, Dillon, Gilbertson, & Wagner, 2015).

The studies in this section do not report drastically different or statistically significant differences in recidivism rates between those in the treatment group and those in the comparison group, potentially due to smaller sample sizes. For three studies it appeared that the differences in rates overall were roughly 10% or less between groups, which suggests a pattern of potential reduction. Some studies did find that more contact hours with the program resulted in greater crime reduction outcomes (Atella et al., 2015; Gies et al., 2015). The young women who participated in the treatment groups were also arrested on less severe charges than those in comparison groups (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2001). The programs were found to provide a variety of other positive self-reported benefits including prosocial relationship skills, community involvement, communication skills, as well as reductions in risk factors, which are potential contributors to delinquency (Atella et al., 2015; Burke et al., 2003). However, one study found that the program did not produce these benefits, potentially due to the low amounts of service received by the participants overall (Gies et al., 2015).

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this literature review the following are recommendations on how to improve programming for justice-involved youth.

Risk and Needs: If possible, pay attention to the specific categories of risks youth in the program face and target these risks as needs for services. For example, if many participants report risks around healthy relationships, provide programming that targets that concept. Attending to individual risk and needs has been shown to be highly effective in reducing future delinquency.

Participation and Retention: Incentivize participants to stay in the program as research shows that receiving a higher dosage of programming, completing programming, and staying even longer beyond mandated requirements can provide a variety of benefits, particularly for higher-risk youth. Some programs offered compensation for youth who participated, however, other methods could be used to get participants to stay. Behavioral contracting was shown to be effective in reducing recidivism, therefore, the program could, for example, provide rewards for no missed sessions to encourage participants to participate. If youth fully participated in the GROW program's activities, the service level would be comparable to many programs in the analysis. Additionally, youth that are kicked out or expelled from programming are more likely to recidivate, therefore, programming should try to avoid doing this. Instead, more intensive or alternative services may be beneficial for these youths.

Size: Keep programs small. Although specific guidelines for appropriate program size were not found, research finds that programs with smaller capacities provide greater benefits than those with larger capacities. This finding may be due to a variety of reasons such as the ability to receive more directed services, form meaningful bonds with adult facilitators/mentors as well as peers, feel connected, learn skills more effectively, among others. If there is a need for expansion it may be wise to create a second group instead of making the group larger.

Traditional Approaches: If incorporating more therapeutic approaches to programming, choose ones that engage the family and have a behavioral component as these have been found to be most beneficial among program types. Family components can include a variety of methods such as parent and youth groups, individual sessions, or family activities. Ideally, family interventions should help support positive family relationships and enhance family stability. Behavioral programs can include CBT, contingency contracting, behavior management, which have been shown to be effective types.

Positive Youth Justice: Implement programs that help youth build transferable employment and vocational skills to facilitate workforce entry or pursuit of post-secondary education. These interventions have been shown to be some of the most effective methods at reducing recidivism in community contexts and have shown to help youth build task management and teamwork skills. Also, provide opportunities for youth to express themselves in a safe space, potentially through the creative arts. Engaging in creative projects can help youth in reducing delinquency, developing hands-on skills, as well as can provide an outlet for self-expression. Additionally, these programs can encourage more prosocial activities and foster youths' confidence in being able to engage in the activities. Programs should also implement elements from the six PYJ practice domains noted above to help foster positive outcomes.

Social Justice Youth Development: Find ways for youth to develop an understanding of the structural societal factors that they are influenced by as well as have meaningful engagement in their community. This goes beyond just taking field trips, engaging in a one-time community event, or discussing issues of race, power, and privilege. Creating opportunities for youth to lead a neighborhood engagement project or critically analyze community issues and present ideas or plans, among others, can be effective ways to foster SJYD within marginalized youth. Creating opportunities for youth to utilize their voice and act on issues of injustice they experience can be powerful in supporting youth's development, building their confidence and self-efficacy, and potentially their future recidivism.

Gender Specific: When providing services to young women, there is relevance for providing programming that incorporates trauma-informed practices and focuses on female empowerment and

analysis of gender-specific social positioning. Additionally, programming that supports healthy cultural and gender identity, and well as incorporates healthy relationship building is also significant. However, it can be argued that these discussions and services can be beneficial for all youth, regardless of gender.

Mentoring: Incorporating young adult mentors from the community and those of similar backgrounds may be a promising approach as many of the programs in the review included mentors or close interactions between participants with project facilitators. This was particularly true of programs that had a positive development approach. Having supportive role models from the community in addition to effective programming can potentially improve program benefits. Additionally, mentoring has been shown to be one of the more effective intervention types for working with justice-involved or at-risk youth.

Aftercare: Be available as a continual support system for youth even after they exit programming. Although aftercare was not necessarily analyzed in the studies noted throughout the analysis, it can be argued that this is a meaningful component as youth who stayed engaged in programming activities for longer had greater outcomes. The opportunity for youth to connect and build social bonds with participants, facilitators, and mentors was noted as beneficial components of these programs, particularly ones that focused more on PYJ and SJYD.

Service Delivery: Many analyses found that using a mixed approach to providing programming is effective in reducing recidivism and fostering outcomes among youth. Therefore, utilizing a combination of family, individual, group, among other methods can be beneficial when providing services. The time when certain activities are engaged in during programming also appears to potentially be important. More problem-focused discussions in the beginning and recreational activities towards the end of a mentoring relationship can be more beneficial than the other way around (Karcher & Johnson, 2016).

Tailor hours and duration to needs of the population: Match program intensity with the risk level of participants. Reserve intensive services for youth at high risk and less intensive services for youth at lower risk. If working with a mixed risk cohort, individualize program services. For example, providing more individualized sessions for those at higher risk in addition to group. Additionally, it appears that when youth received 4 hours of individual service in addition to group per month, their probation violations decreased by 53% (Bennett et al., 2010). Therefore, consistent weekly individual engagement may be critical along with additional services.

Program Quality: Ensure programs are of high quality and seek continual improvement as program quality is consistently related to effects on recidivism. Program quality does not have to mean a model

program, but the effective use of time and the implementation of techniques that are backed by evidence or theory to foster beneficial for outcomes for youth. It is argued that model programs show high impacts of recidivism because researchers are often closely involved in development and implementation and that there are program manuals and guidelines for others to utilize during implementation. Therefore, having structured curriculum or activities that staff can follow in the future will be beneficial in terms of providing benefits and maintaining consistency of services and evaluation.

Staff: Ensure staff are appropriately selected, trained, resourced, and supervised to develop meaningful relationships with youth and deliver services to youth with high quality. It has been found that the benefits of model programs only hold if the therapists involved are competent. When therapists were incompetent programs have been found to increase recidivism rates for youth (Balkin et al., 2011). Therefore, it is not always necessarily what the program does, but how competent those who deliver the program are. Additionally, building social ties with those who implemented the program was important for youth's development. Therefore, not only should staff be competent in service delivery but they should be able to meaningfully engage with youth.

Part 2. Recidivism Analysis of Neighborhood House's GROW Program

The GROW Program

The Girls Realizing our Worth (GROW) program became one of the few community-based sites in St. Paul in 2012 to provide gender-specific programming for young females ages (13-18) involved in the juvenile justice system. The program is part of the Ramsey County, MN Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) as well as the larger federal initiative to reduce detention of youth in secure facilities and promote positive youth development through community-based interventions. GROW addresses immediate basic needs while also building on the strengths, abilities, and assets of young women – an approach that has the potential to reduce recidivism and delinquent behaviors while also helping young women to build healthy identities and gain skills to become self-reliant.

The GROW program is housed within the GRIP programs at Neighborhood House. There are two separate GROW program groups, a mandatory 3-month program that targets young women on probation, and an ongoing group called GROW 2.0 for at-risk young women who have either completed the mandatory program or have been referred from other community organizations, schools, or programs. This analysis focuses on young females who participated in the mandatory GROW program.

Young women are referred to the program by their probation officers in RCCC as a mandatory condition of their probation. They are also referred by youth engagement workers from the Minnesota Departments of Human services as part of the youth engagement program (YEP). The YEP serves youth who have committed status offenses such as truancy or runaway.

The program holds after school weekly group sessions that are 2.5 hours long. The group cohorts are 3 months long and they deliver programming to 4 cohorts a year. They serve up to 10 young women per cohort. They also hold 1 hour weekly individual sessions with youth where GRIP staff and interns work with youth on 2 personal goals, identify strengths and needs, barriers to meeting goals, and work on individual skill building focused on coping and trauma. They also take quarterly cultural or recreational field trips and college tours that the young women can participate in.

The GROW program provides services in a variety of areas that have evolved over the years. These include maintaining and developing healthy relationships, promoting positive gender and cultural identity, safe sexual health practices, and developing life and career skills. They learn about trauma and gain an understanding of how trauma has potentially impacted them and their behaviors, as well as skills for how to regulate emotions and behaviors. The youth also engage in a variety of activities that incorporate a social justice youth development component. These include learning about power and

privilege in society, including racism, economic, and political factors. They also discuss historical trauma and its impacts, as well as issues of environmental justice.

Methods

Data Collection:

Data regarding the girl's participation in GROW was obtained from a variety of Neighborhood House's sources. Initially, the names and information of young women were obtained from a master spreadsheet of participants since 2012 and combined with participant information reported to the county on a quarterly basis regarding enrollment dates and hours of services participants received. This information was then cross-referenced to participant information reported in ClientTrack, Neighborhood House's internal database. Some young women exited and re-enrolled in the program more than once and they were included only once in the dataset. Participants were removed from the dataset if they could not be identified by at least two of the three sources of participant information. They were also removed if they had less than one unit of service. The dataset included participants enrolled starting June 2012 and who exited up until June 2016. Participants who exited the program after June 2016 were not included due to the time needed to calculate recidivism.

Determination of Services:

The number of services participants received was determined by the number of units. Service hours and requirements for graduating from the program have changed since the program's inception, therefore, after discussions with the Program Coordinator, it was determined that 8 or more units of service was an appropriate determination of adequate services received for this analysis. Units of service followed this formula:

2 hours of group = 1 unit of service

1 hour of individual = 1 unit of service

Participants had variability in services received, some had greater participation in group and some received only individual services. The minimum services they could have received ranged from roughly 8 hours to 16 hours. Therefore, to standardize their receipt of services the unit formula was used, with the underlying assumption that 1 hour of individualized services was equivalent to 2 hours of participation in group. Units of service were determined by cross-referencing the individual and group hours from ClientTrack and the individual and group hours found in the reporting spreadsheets. If any combination of group and individual hours (4 combinations) clearly put them above or below the 8-unit threshold,

they were placed in the appropriate group. Exit date from the program was determined by the last date of service received in ClientTrack. Length of participation was calculated using participants' first and last date of service in the program from ClientTrack. Participants were then separated into the following groups:

8+ units 9 months or less – “full service”

8+ units more than 9 months – “multiple services”

1-7 units – “low service”

9 months was chosen as the time threshold to separate the participants who exited and entered the program more than once with a considerable separation in time between exit and entry. Participants in the “full service” group may have received 8+ units within a shorter time and continued to receive services within the 9 months without officially exiting. Those in the “multiple services” group may have received well beyond 8+ units over time. Due to the data limitations noted below and the relatively small number of youth in this analysis, higher service groups were not obtained.

Limitations of Data Collection:

There were several limitations to the collection and organization of data regarding GROW participants' program participation. The following are notable issues that arose during the process.

- Information found in ClientTrack and the spreadsheets reported to the county often did not match and had errors.
 - There were several instances where hours were reported as units and vice versa or hours were entered in ClientTrack in entirely wrong units (24hrs, 12units, etc.).
 - Program participation hours often did not match between the two sources of information.
 - Sometimes participants' activities were entered several times for the same day.
 - Interpretation of these data discrepancies and errors often occurred and were discussed with the Program Coordinator to determine a more accurate depiction of services received.
- Information was entered in ClientTrack under separate program or service descriptions over the years.
 - It was difficult to correctly add participant hours of GROW participation due to the variability in program descriptions used over the years or how services were entered.

- Determining appropriate exit date was difficult as the two sources of information often had different dates or youth were served immediately after they were reported to the county as having exited.
- There were some participants whose program participation hours did not clearly place them either above or below the 8+ unit threshold. When this occurred the group attendance sheet was introduced as a 5th data point for cross-referencing. If at least 4 out of the 5 combinations of service hours clearly put youth above or below the threshold they were placed in the appropriate category.

Data collection and Recidivism Measurement Provided by RCCC:

Information regarding participants was shared with RCC and GROW participants were identified by RCC using their court ID number or name and birth date to obtain recidivism data as well as information regarding YLS/CMI risk level, initial offense type, and race.

New offenses were identified and retrieved through the statewide court system (MNCIS) and included both adjudicated delinquent and non-adjudicated dispositions. New adult offenses committed during the follow-up period(s) were also included, where applicable. New offenses must have had a disposition pronounced as of November 30, 2017, to be included in this analysis.

There were two recidivism related measures provided:

- *Overall* recidivism – The percentage of female youth who committed any new offense (misdemeanor level or higher).
- *Serious* recidivism – The percentage of female youth who committed a felony, gross misdemeanor, or misdemeanor person offense (e.g. 5th-degree assault, disorderly conduct that involved brawling or fighting, weapons possession). *Serious* recidivism is a subset of *Overall* recidivism.

Qualifying event dates:

- *GROW* group – For these young women, new offenses were tracked after the *program discharge date* provided by Neighborhood House. Recidivism rates for the young women in the “multiple services” category were calculated using the participant’s last exit date.
- *Comparison* group – For these young women, new offenses were tracked after the *probation start date*

There were two recidivism intervals provided for each measure:

- 6-month: The percentage of female youth who reoffended within six months of the qualifying event date.
- 12-month: The percentage of female youth who reoffended within twelve months of the qualifying event date.

Comparison Group Determination Provided by RCCC:

RCCC determined a comparison group of similar young women who were on probation to compare recidivism rates. RCCC initially obtained a data extract of 1,103 young women who started probation during the period June 2012 – June 2016. Data were matched to GROW participants on YLS/CMI risk level, age, race, and offense profile. From this matched group, a randomized sample was obtained, resulting in a comparison group of 160 young women.

Receipt of Data:

After information was obtained by RCC the information was then shared with Neighborhood House in the form of aggregate data, which included frequency and percentage breakdowns.

Sample

The final GROW sample included 79 young women, 6 were excluded due to lack of services received or ability to identify sufficient participant data. 2 participants' service groups were unknown due to discrepancies in the data, but they were included in overall rates.

Figure 1. Presents the distribution of GROW participants by level of services received. Roughly half of the participants received "full service" and approximately one-third of participants did not complete at least 8 units of service and the remaining participants received "multiple services."

Figure 1. GROW Participant Service Groups
Total n=79

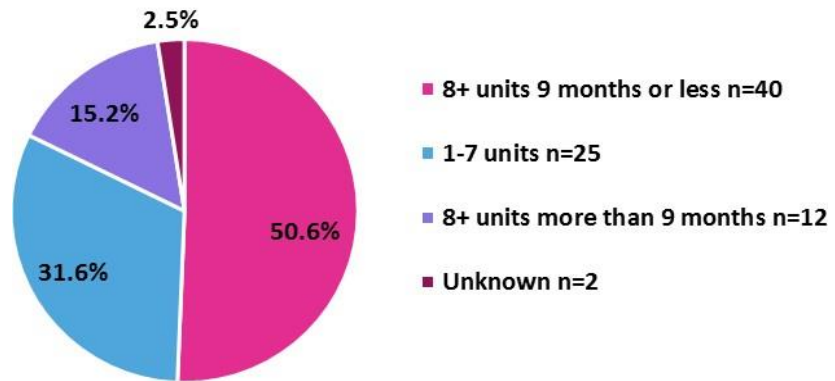


Figure 2. Presents the distribution of race among GROW participants. Majority of the participants served were African American.

Figure 2. GROW Participants by Race
Total n=79

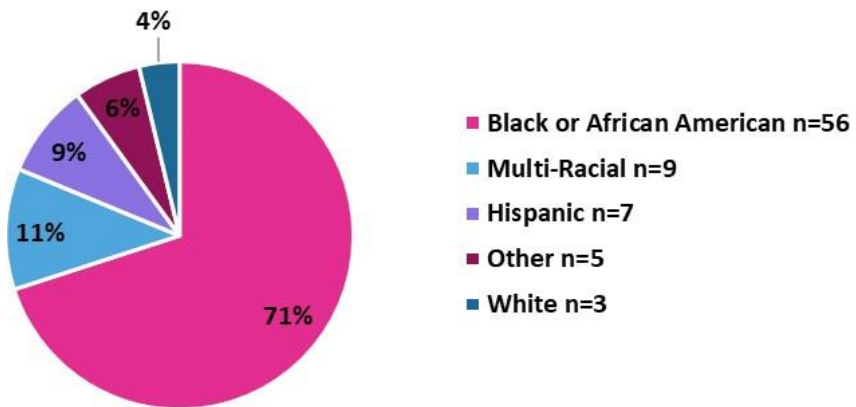


Figure 3. Presents the age of GROW participants at exit date from the program. Roughly half of the youth served were between the ages of 15 and 16.

Figure 3. GROW Participants by Age at Exit
Total n=79

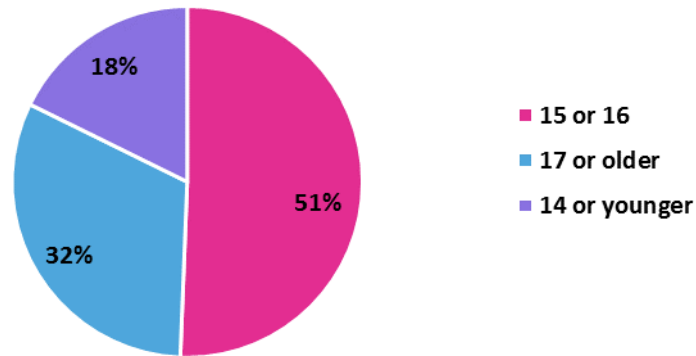


Figure 4. Presents GROW participants by YLS/CMI risk level. The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory is an assessment used by the juvenile justice system in Ramsey County to assess youth's risks and needs and potential for reoffending. Majority of the youth served were medium and high risk and a significant portion had unknown risk levels.

Figure 4. GROW Participants by YLS/CMI Risk Level
Total n=79

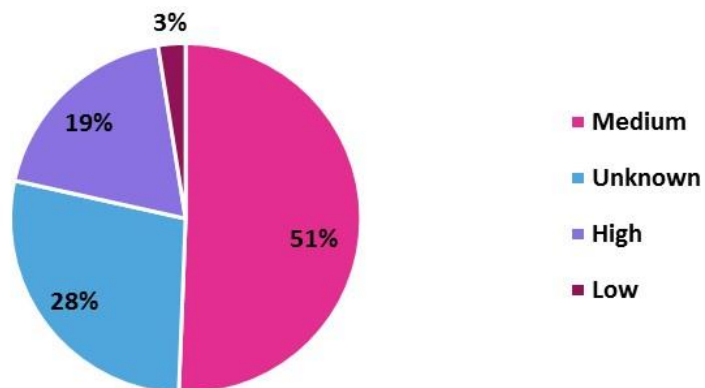


Figure 5. Presents GROW participants by offense type when referred to the GROW program. Majority of the youth served had delinquency offenses.

Figure 5. GROW Participants by Offense Type
Total n=79

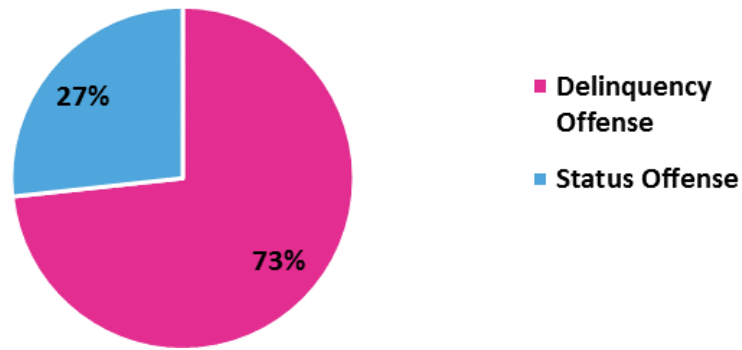
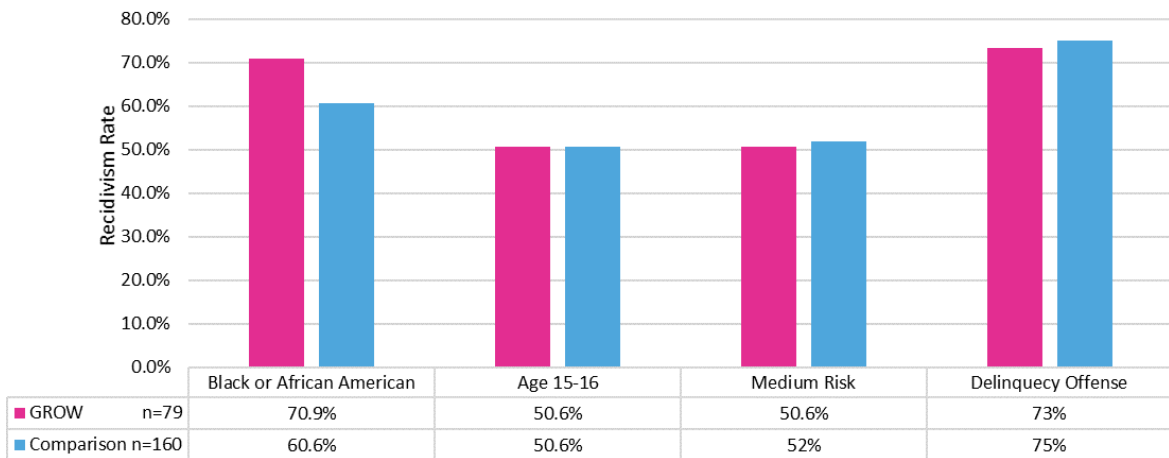


Figure 6. Presents the matched characteristics of GROW participants and those in the comparison group. The groups are nearly equal in all characteristics except race. A greater percentage of GROW participants were Black or African American than in the comparison group.

Figure 6. GROW vs. Comparison Group Characteristics



Results

Limitations:

Although the purpose of this study was to compare GROW participants' recidivism to a group of similar young women on probation in order to make conclusions about GROW's effectiveness, it is important to consider the significant limitations before discussing findings. There are several points to consider before drawing conclusions about the GROW participants and those in the comparison group. The following are important points regarding the data:

- RCCC was unable to determine more information about those in the comparison group regarding receipt of services. Those in the comparison group may have also received community services as a condition of their probation or received regular probation. Therefore, the rates are not necessarily comparing those who received no services, but just young women who did not receive GROW. Additionally, it is not known what services they were potentially involved with.
- The comparison groups' recidivism was calculated from the start date of their probation, whereas, the GROW participants' recidivism was calculated starting after they exited the GROW program. Therefore, GROW participants may have been off probation and not receiving services for more time than those in the comparison group during the period for when recidivism was calculated.
- Recidivism was calculated for the "multi-services" group at their last program exit date. Therefore, the analysis did not necessarily take into consideration prior offenses, which is potentially why they were re-referred to the program.
- Many GROW participants did not receive the recommended 8+ unit dosage of services. Therefore, there was great variability in the number of units of service received among participants as all participants were included in the overall rates of recidivism.
- GROW participants could have continued to receive services after their exit date, either through the GROW 2.0 program other organizations. Participants could have also been referred back to the program in a time period that was not included in the analysis. Participant activities or exit dates after June 2016 were not included in the analysis. This could have potentially impacted recidivism rates for a small subset of participants.
- Although data were matched on the characteristics available, there are a variety of other individual and environmental factors in the youths' lives that were unable to be accounted for

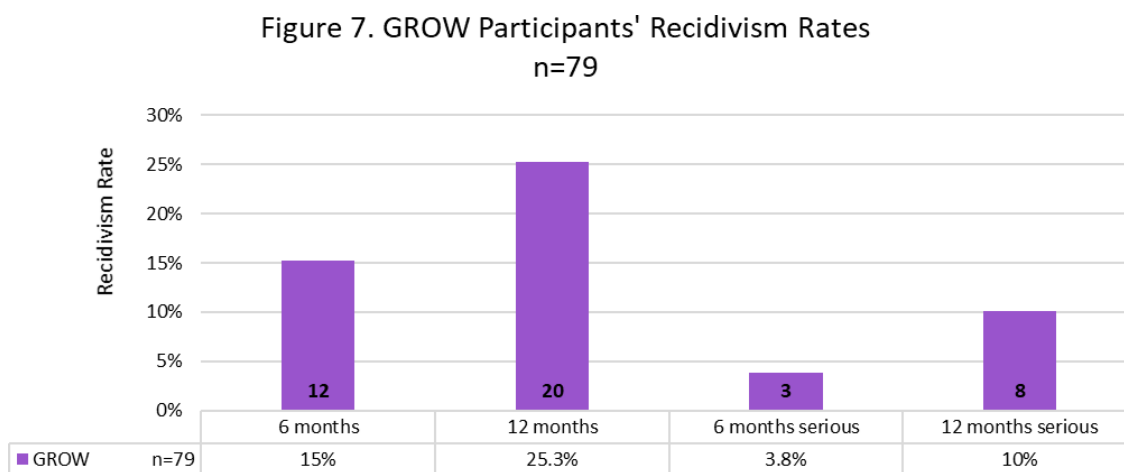
that may have potentially impacted recidivism. Therefore, differences between the GROW participants and comparison group cannot necessarily be attributed to the GROW program in this analysis.

- The data discrepancies noted above may have impacted the results, specifically regarding exit dates and when comparing groups with different levels of service within the GROW participants.

Therefore, given these limitations, the results are merely illustrative of potential patterns of recidivism and readers should be cautious of drawing conclusions regarding these findings. Additionally, due to the small sample size and particularly small breakdowns by characteristic groupings, small percentage differences should not be used to make strong conclusions.

Recidivism Rates of GROW Participants:

Figure 7. Presents GROW participants’ overall recidivism rates. At 6 months the rate was 15% and 25.3% at 12 months. For serious offenses, the rate was 3.8% at 6 months and 10% at 12 months. Therefore, the recidivism rates tended to increase the longer youth were away from programming.

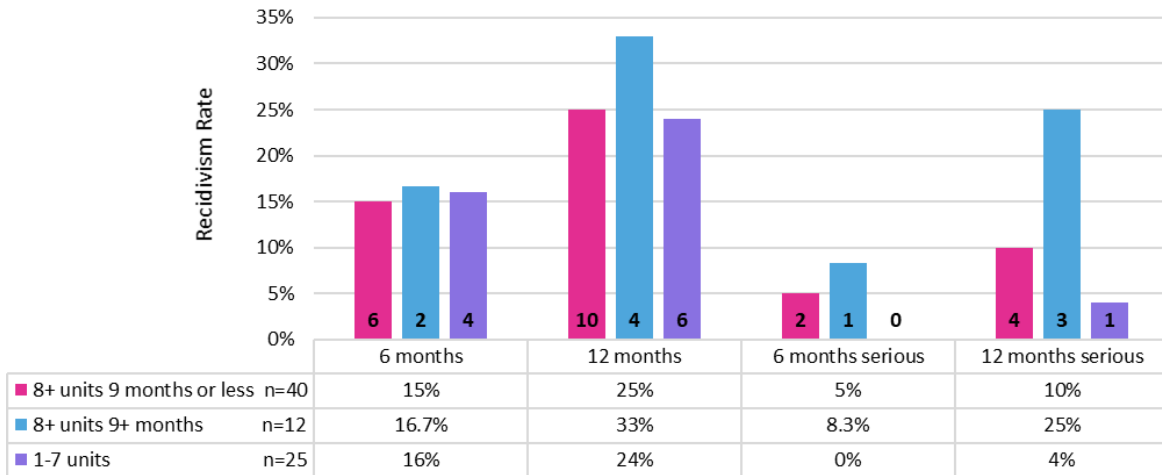


Differences Between GROW Participants:

Figure 8. Presents GROW participants’ recidivism rates by service level groupings. There were no substantial differences between the groups. Therefore, no strong conclusions can be made regarding the groups due to small sample sizes. However, in general, the recidivism rates of those who received “full service” were no different any of the time frames than those who received “low service”. Additionally, those in the “multiple services” category were potentially slightly more likely to have

recidivated at 12 months and recidivated on more serious charges. 2 participants were not included in this graph due to inability to determine the number of services received, however, they were included in overall rates.

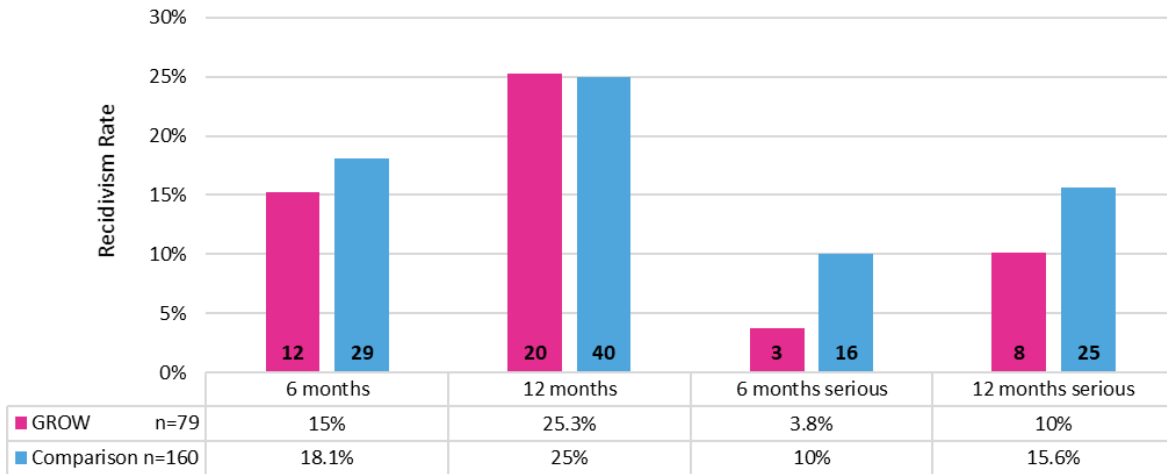
Figure 8. GROW Participants' Recidivism Rates by Service Level



Differences Between GROW Participants and Comparison Group Recidivism:

Figure 9. Presents the overall recidivism rates of GROW participants and those in the comparison group. RCCC used overall rates due to small differences between the service level groups and due to the small sample size. The rates of recidivism between the groups were fairly similar. No strong conclusions can be made regarding the recidivism rates due to small sample size and small percentage differences. However, a potential pattern that can be seen is that those in the comparison group were potentially slightly more likely to have recidivated on serious charges than GROW participants. The differences were particularly notable at 6-months from program exit, as this is where there is the largest percentage difference.

Figure 9. GROW vs. Comparison Group Recidivism Rates



Recidivism Rates by Characteristics:

RCCC provided additional recidivism rate comparisons regarding race, age, offense profile, and risk level. Due to the smaller sample sizes when rates were broken down by groups, notable differences are discussed as potential patterns rather than graphically.

Race: The results indicate that Black or African American GROW participants were potentially slightly less likely to have recidivated on serious offenses at 6 months (5.4% vs 11.3%) and 12 months (10.7% vs 17.5%). There were no differences regarding overall recidivism. The small sizes of the other race categories did not allow for conclusions to be drawn.

Age: Youth aged 15-16 were slightly less likely to have recidivated overall than those who were 14 or younger and 17 or older at 6 months, 7.5%, 21.4%, and 24% respectively. This was also true at 12 months with rates at 20%, 28.6%, and 32% respectively. The overall rates of recidivism for 15-16-year-olds were slightly lower than the comparison group at 6 months (7.5% vs 16.2%) and 12 months (20% vs 27.9%) and lower for serious offenses at 6 months (2.5% vs 8.8%) and 12 months (12.5% vs 20.6%). At 12 months overall, GROW participants age 14 or younger and those age 17 or older were slightly more likely to have recidivated than the comparison group, however, the recidivism was less likely to be for severe charges.

Offense Profile: GROW participants who were in the program due to status offenses did not recidivate at any point during the time frame of this analysis. At 6 months the rates were (0% vs. 12.5%), 12 months (0% vs 17.5%), 6 months serious (0% vs 10%), 12 months serious (0% vs 15%). Additionally, this

demonstrates that most of status offending youth in the comparison group recidivated on serious charges at 6 months and 12 months, as serious and overall rates were fairly similar.

Risk Level: Nearly one-third of participants were missing on risk level, therefore, conclusions about risk level and recidivism could not be appropriately drawn.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although the recidivism rates were not substantially different between GROW participants and those in the comparison group, there were notable findings to discuss within the results, as well as in comparison to information found in the literature review. However, it must be noted that these differences or patterns are potentially due to the characteristics of the individual's themselves or their environment, and not necessarily the influence of the program.

Overall:

The findings of the overall recidivism rates indicate that the GROW program may be a protective factor against recidivism of serious offenses, as youths in the comparison group were slightly more likely to have recidivated on serious offenses. The difference was slightly larger at 6 months. Studies of other programs for justice-involved youth have also found program participants to recidivate on less severe charges than the comparison group, although the differences were typically more pronounced (Bennett et al., 2010; Karcher & Johnson, 2016; King et al., 2001; National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2001).

The lack of differences found between GROW participants and those in the comparison group can have a variety of explanations. How the comparison was comprised is notable in this case. The comparison groups' activities while on probation may have influenced the potential for larger differences. Those in the comparison group may or may not have received services as a condition of their probation, if they did, this may be a potential explanation for similar rates. GROW participants were compared to individuals at a potentially different time frame in their probation experience. GROW participants' recidivism was tracked at 6 and 12 months from program exit, whereas, the comparison group was tracked from probation start date. GROW participants did not necessarily end probation or exit programming at the same time. However, this may have influenced the rates as GROW participants may have had more time without supervision or services during the follow-up period. A comparison group of those who received traditional probation services and who ended supervision at similar times may have more illustrative findings. An analysis comparing those who received GROW programming to those who

did not receive programming from their start dates of probation, rather than program exit may also provide more illustrative findings. Additionally, the comparison group had a lower percentage of Black or African American youth. This may have caused the rates for the comparison group to be slightly lower as these youths are more likely to be found to recidivate in general.

The rates of recidivism were similar to those of females in Ramsey County, MN. Between 2011 and 2015, the average recidivism rate at 12 months from probation start date for females was 27.25% (Ramsey County Community Corrections, 2017). The 12-month recidivism rate of GROW participants was also in the middle of 10-40% recidivism range found in studies of community-based programs. The lower rates of recidivism were mostly found in studies with first time nonviolent offenders, therefore 25% may near an average for youth with medium and high-risk profiles. The rates were also generally similar to the young female-specific programs. The definition of recidivism varied from study to study, with some analyzing only rearrests, new charges or adjudicated charges, among others, which makes it difficult to compare. However, the differences in the rates between treatment and comparison groups were often more pronounced than the differences observed in this analysis.

A surprising finding was the differences in rates between counties within the Minnesota metropolitan region. The young women in the RADIUS program in Hennepin County, MN which offers programming similar to GROW had a recidivism rate of 46% for participants, which was roughly 20% higher than the GROW participants (Atella et al., 2015). The comparison group's recidivism rate was also higher than the comparison group for the GROW analysis. Therefore, this could explain that the rates in Ramsey County, MN are relatively low or there are differential system level practices within similar geographic regions.

Larger differences or lower rates of recidivism between GROW participants and the comparison group may have been observed if participants in the GROW program had higher rates of participation in programming. As noted prior, there was great variability in the number of services received. Over 30% received less than 8 units of service. There was also significant variation within the "full service" category.

Characteristics:

Perhaps the most noteworthy finding was that youth who had a status offense when they participated in GROW did not recidivate at any point after leaving the program. Whereas, those in the comparison group who had status offenses recidivated at a rate similar to the rates for the overall comparison group. This finding demonstrates that the GROW program may be a protective factor for these youths who may have been at low-risk of reoffending to begin with. Research has noted that mixing higher and

lower risk justice-involved youth can be harmful to lower risk offenders, due to there being increased opportunities for low-risk youth to be exposed to the behaviors of higher risk youth, which has been said to potentially increase chances for recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). However, this did not seem to be the case for participants in the GROW program as it does not take a rehabilitative approach and utilizes concepts of PYJ and SJD. The findings demonstrate that most of the status offending youth in the comparison group who recidivated did so on serious charges. Therefore, this theory may have been true for those in the comparison group as they may have been negatively exposed to the system or did not receive supportive services.

A second finding from the analysis regarding characteristics was that youth who were in the 15-16 age range when they exited appeared to recidivate slightly less than the other age groups regarding overall offenses. They also appeared to recidivate less than those in the comparison group regarding overall and serious offenses. Therefore, this finding can indicate that the 15-16 age range may be a particularly effective time for intervention or that youth at that point in their development are more responsive to services. Additionally, the older and younger youth both appeared to recidivate at a higher rate, but on less severe charges than similar youth in the comparison group. However, the differences for severe charges were quite small. This may indicate individual needs of these age ranges that are not being met or potentially greater risks among these youths served by GROW.

Lastly, the findings demonstrate that the program may be helpful for reducing serious offending among African American youth, with the differences being larger at 12 months. However, these differences were quite small.

In conclusion, the findings were relatively favorable. The results were suggestive of positive outcomes for youth and that GROW may be a beneficial component to promoting development for justice-involved youth. However, if more precise information regarding the program and participants were available, further illustrative findings could be observed. Therefore, the report is ended with a list of suggestions to improve evaluations in the future or help identify outcomes of participants.

Recommendations

Data collection and entry: A significant amount of time was spent organizing participant information and resolving errors found in the data. There was a discrepancy between the data found in ClientTrack and the reporting spreadsheets for nearly every participant in the program. There were also multiple errors in the units or hours that were entered, for example, 2 group hours being reported as 24 hours.

Although a significant amount of the data that was analyzed was from multiple years past and policies and practices may have changed, it is recommended that Neighborhood House finds ways to improve data collection and management to ensure accuracy if more analyses of outcomes want to be conducted.

Participant Activity Tracking: Correctly tracking the program or activities youth participate in will also be beneficial to the program and future analyses. Several program or service descriptions have been used over time, therefore, it was sometimes difficult to easily determine which program they were being served under (GROW vs. GROW 2.0). It may be beneficial to track when a participant reaches the minimum service required for graduation, and track their additional services from that point. Therefore, it could easily be determined how long it took youth to complete programming, if they consistently participated, or how long they maintained active in programming beyond the mandated requirement. Also, tracking aftercare services can be important for future evaluations.

Threshold of Services: The results found that there were no differences between GROW participants regarding the different threshold of services received. Therefore, potentially making this threshold higher and within a shorter time frame may produce different results. Although, in order for this to occur participant data would need to be more precise.

Assess Intermediate Outcomes: Some of the studies in the literature review assessed recidivism along with other positive participant outcomes through a variety of methods. Assessing self-reported outcomes may be easier information to gather and may be illustrative of immediate or intermediate indicators of future success. This can be done through pre-post surveys of youth when they enter and exit the program, follow-up surveys during aftercare, or program facilitator assessments. A significant limitation in using court recidivism data is that it only captures behaviors that youth are being caught and receiving a citation for. Asking youth to report their delinquency behaviors may capture changes in behaviors that court records are unable to.

Comparison Group: Attempt to analyze recidivism or outcomes to a comparison group that is from a similar time frame, such as 6 or 12 months from probation start date for both groups. Additionally, attempt to understand the type of service or probation the youth in the comparison group received. Knowing whether or not they received traditional probation or other community services is important in drawing more confident conclusions.

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