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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

ILLINOIS MENTAL HEALTH COURTS:

INTRA-GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE COURTROOM WORK GROUP

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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For my lovely mother

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to gain insight into key social psychological constructs in an unexplored work-group context: one premised on true *team* structure. Exploratory information on intra-group dynamics in Illinois mental health courts addressed levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution within mental health court teams.

A survey assessed how court group members associate these central variables with their teams. All reported relatively high levels of trust and team efficacy, and solid capacities for communication, coordination, and conflict resolution. No notable differences emerged in these variables relative to length of courts' operation. Team members from multiple disciplines held diverse roles, and members reported varied lengths of association with their programs; nevertheless, stability issues appeared not to impede intra-group dynamics.

It is suggested that inclusive-group research like this be expanded to multiple court environments and that future program evaluations include social dynamics in examinations of such specialized work groups.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRA-GROUP DYNAMICS AND THE COURT SYSTEM

Over the past few decades, increased attention has been paid to understanding

group dynamics within criminal justice environments. Moving beyond historical

sociological and criminological theories, consideration of the social psychological bases

of group processes and influences—individual-level contributions or interactions between

groups brought about by budgetary or social changes—has become more and more

widely accepted.

Without a doubt, these efforts have represented important strides in the field, and

in expanding community beliefs about the criminal justice system as a whole. Yet some

gaps do exist. Research has often concentrated on certain subgroups within the system

(e.g., juries, defendants), for example, or on specific areas of expertise and system roles

(e.g., judges, attorneys). Not only are work groups convened to meet immediate or

environmentally driven needs of the system, they are to a great extent considered critical

to effective programming. These groups are also quite often comprised of individuals

from different disciplines, and this has demonstrated a glaring lack of information on

intra-group strengths and challenges from *teams* themselves.

The study presented is an initial effort to attend to some of these gaps. A

statewide project was undertaken to examine overarching questions related to the strength

of key intra-group dynamics within teams formed as part as the organizational court

structure. In particular, what are the levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution within Illinois' Mental Health Court teams? Are there differences in these variables as a function of how long the courts have been in operation? Do team members' roles reflect a diverse range of sectors, and can the amount of time involved with their Court programs be seen to be influential on the degrees of these variables that they report?

The intent of this research was to gain insight on key social psychological constructs in an unexplored work group context: one that is premised on true *team* structure. It was expected that initial knowledge of the inner workings of Mental Health Court teams in Illinois would be gained, and would also offer support to a broad base of literature that currently exists. The rest of this chapter will therefore provide an important foundation for this study. First, background on key constructs in intra-group literature will be examined, with consideration to their influences on other group functioning factors. Second, past and current research on such constructs in criminal justice contexts will be reviewed. Finally, how these social psychological processes interact in the novel infrastructure of specialty courts will be considered, and the primary research questions of the current study introduced.

Group Dynamics in Social Psychology

The dynamics between individuals and groups have long intrigued social scientists—and engendered conflict between them. In group settings, the focus of research on individual motivations and needs in group alignment, processes within groups and interactions between group members, and collaboration and differences

across groups, has shed light on similarities and differences that exist in a wide variety of group contexts. In recent years, this research has been particularly instrumental for understanding work teams, a specific type of group generally formed for an organizational rather than social purpose. The following sections present a broad overview of intra-group dynamics within such work contexts, and relevant to the current study.

Background on Work Groups

McGrath and Argote (2001) present a definition of teams in organizational settings that emphasizes interdependence, social system entrenchment, and members' awareness that they constitute a unified group. The authors also recognize the dynamic nature of such teams, noting that fragility and success are determined not only by whether projects are accomplished (one primary function of a group) but by whether the needs of group members are fulfilled. In organizations, *teams* are conceived of as one type of work group, distinguished from crews or task forces through a primary focus on their *members* (as opposed to projects or technologies), with the expectation that member-resource relations may continue indefinitely (contrasted with time-limited work shifts or tasks, for example). Because of this inferred or expected longevity, the authors make clear that teams' particular vulnerabilities lie in changes to their membership.

Kerr and Tindale (2004) emphasize the importance of such groups and understanding them, suggesting how, in work environments, groups can be understood as important—indeed, critical contributors to an organization's success. Both processes and outcomes may be affected by how closely group members "share a conceptual system of

ideas," or "shared task representations" (p. 638). When connections are strong, the impact

on both group processes and outcomes can be especially positive and so can result in

more favorable solutions to problems than individuals alone might achieve. McGrath and

Argote also include group consensus, coordination among members, and the ability to

identify and work through conflict as key functions critical to defining a group's success.

In short, the establishment of such elements as trust, communication, and efficacy is

essential not only to the composition of work groups, but their ability to meet both short-

and long-term individual and group goals.

The Element of Trust

At the outset, the conception of trust as fundamental to the performance and

relationships within groups would seem so obvious a component of teamwork that it is

usually assumed to be inherent. Muchinsky (2003) has defined trust as "the belief that

even though you have no control over another person's behavior toward you, that person

will behave in a way that benefits you" (p. 293). In group settings, experts concur that the

absence, or especially violation, of trust, can have ripple effects and render groups

incapable of functioning**.**

The work of Lind and Tyler on group-value models (1988, as cited in Muchinsky,

2003) provides a solid framework for considering trust in work group settings. If

leadership is perceived to be fair, altruistic, and accommodating to others, they say, the

members will commit themselves to the group for the long term. If trust is maintained,

procedural justice—or members' perceptions that their opinions matter and that an

organization's policies are just—will also be maintained. This view has been further

explored by Schroeder et al. (2003), who see the issue of procedural justice in the context of social dilemmas. They show that, where common goals—rather than the self-interest of a group leader or member—are (or are perceived to be) most important, a sense of equality is fostered, and trust can therefore be assumed to be advanced as well.

Rousseau's (1995, as cited in Muchinsky, 2003) theory of the *psychological contract*, "the exchange relationship between an individual employee and the organization" (p. 323), highlights the importance of establishing and maintaining mutual confidence. Employees who believe that promises will be kept and that their involvement is valued will be motivated to contribute to the organization (and, likely, to their own work groups). However, when trust is perceived to have been violated, assurance will be lacking, and the likelihood of future cooperation and continued organizational commitment may be compromised.

An extensive body of literature on the construct exists. Kerr and Park (2001), for example, addressed the matter of trust, mostly speaking to individual differences, but in a way that has implications for the group as a whole. They relay the work of Parks, Menager, and Scamahorn (1996, as cited in Kerr and Park, 2001) to better understand the impact of different *levels* of trust on group members' willingness to accept others' intentions. Specifically, even if a member expresses an aim to work cooperatively, members of the group with low levels of trust may tend to discount such avowals. In addition, if they suspect competitive intent, they are likely to withdraw cooperation. Those with high levels of trust, on the other hand, are likely to continue with a collaborative purpose and ignore any concerns of contrary motivation.

Thus, the implications for positive intra-group dynamics can readily be seen: higher pro-social behavior coupled with trust results in more positive unified solutions. Further, closeness of team members acts as a catalyst to trust. In today's world, even close-knit teams may rely on technologies to conduct team work (the telephone, video teleconferences, webinars). Studies have shown, however, that, when work group members interact face to face, their organizational citizenship behavior is firmly predicated on trust (Yakovleva, Reilly & Werko, 2010).

Dimensions of Communication

As this discussion implies, *communication* is inherent in the trust construct, and thus is crucial to understanding and cooperation. Whether oral or written, interpersonal communication in a work group can have far-ranging results. Frequency and continuity of communication, as well as directness of delivery, are often identified as the key to teams' success (Muchinsky, 2003). When effective communication is the norm, groups may be more likely to differentiate between resources that are most or least appropriate to their goals—both joint and individual. Members of such teams will clearly be more committed to identifying what (or who) may be needed to satisfy team needs.

A common theme emerges in the social-psychological research on small groups: *information sharing*. This is but one function of communication, to be sure, but it is the most apparent one. Team members can perceive new information as valid simply because it is conveyed to them (Tindale, Meisenhelder, Dykema-Engblade & Hogg, 2001). If this level of communication continues, members may also modify their own perspectives to align with the new information. Kerr and Tindale (2004) suggest that this has a group-

satisficing purpose, in that it requires limited processing by the group: if the members all "know something, it probably does have more validity than something that is only known by one member" (p. 642).

This is not to say that the *type* of information shared is of secondary importance, but good communication is the facilitator in almost every circumstance. This is particularly so when the information to be shared is of an emotional or time-driven nature.

Overall, theorists concur that what is shared and how it is shared can have a significant impact on the ways in which teams function. Group decision making is heavily influenced by shared information, often understood as the "common knowledge effect" (Tindale et al., 2001, p. 13). As well as building on theories of shared cognitions, a wide body of literature also demonstrates that the way groups perform, as well as the processes themselves, are consistently affected—and often revised—on the basis of information shared by team members, rather than of external influences. Behavioral integration (as well as face-to-face interaction) is increased in teams whose members hold shared views; likewise, the quality of communication is strengthened as these like perceptions foster information sharing (Yakovleva, Reilly & Werko, 2010).

When communication is poor or lacking, within-group breakdowns may occur. Moreover, even when teams engage in information sharing, team members may be aware of some disconnection between mutual and personal interests. Known in the literature as *social dilemma*, this conflict can produce changes in behaviors, thinking, and trust if the problem is not resolved. A meta-analysis conducted by Sally (1995, as cited in Balliet,

2009), brought to light how communication in situations identified as social dilemmas was critical to increasing cooperation. Simple communication can be seen to transcend individual-versus-team interest conflicts, facilitating collaborative action within groups. Balliet (2009) later expanded on this research, conducting his own meta-analysis, which relates to the impact of communication on cooperation. Not only do seized opportunities to communicate increase accommodating behaviors; the *type* of communication in which group members engage matters. Specifically, face-to-face dialogue has the largest positive effect on enhanced cooperation.

Of course, a number of other factors account for both a group's ability to engage in and the quality of personal discussions. As Yakovleva, Reilly, and Werko (2010) pointed out, the proximity (meaning actual physical nearness) in which team members work together affects levels of trust within the team. Close contact also offers opportunities for communication and may determine the strength or weakness of that.

Balliet (2009), in examining moderators of the communication-cooperation relationship, found that group size, too, weighs heavily on the effectiveness of the information conveyed. The level of cooperation engendered by communication improves as group sizes increase. The author's analysis of groups ranging in size from 2 to 9 persons seems to suggest that moderately sized groups (rather than small, 2-4 person teams) present the best chance for productive communication. And for work teams in which personal interaction is the norm, this positive effect would probably be intensified.

Aspects of Coordination

The quality and effectiveness of intra-team communication is additionally affected by other group dynamics. Trust, as an example, is particularly important when coordination is central to team functioning. Yakovleva, Reilly, and Werko (2010) posit that if team effectiveness is driven by citizenship behavior between members, involvement of trusting partners is crucial for projects that require high interdependence. Moreover, as team members' interdependence for task completion increases, so does team communication and the level of coordination that members demonstrate (DeRue, Hollenbeck, Ilgen & Feltz, 2010).

Coordination has a variety of meanings, each of which conveys a subtle distinction in group operations. "Coordination of interests" relates to the synchronization of members' intentions and basic values; "coordination of understandings" suggests the degree of harmony in interpreting information; and "coordination of actions" is associated with the place, content, and time of members' group activities (McGrath & Argote, 2001, p. 611).

Group coordination can be affected by a number of things, including relationship or process conflicts (Behfar, Mannix, Peterson & Trochim, 2011). Further, a lack of coordination may produce or exacerbate existing conflict and confusion within groups. For that reason, many work teams establish expectations (regarding workloads, deadlines, or roles, for example) in the belief that doing so will minimize or even eliminate uncertainties. As presented by van Dijk and Wilke (1995, as cited in Schroeder et al., 2003), these basic "coordination rules" allow team members to "govern their actions and

satisfy the basic goal of fairness: the specific rule to be applied is dependent on the nature

of the dilemma to be confronted" (p. 378). If these rules are compromised, divergence

from team goals may occur. And, given that conflict is a clearly interwoven aspect of

social dilemmas (Schroeder et al., 2003), coordination is not all that is at risk when rules

are broken; communication and trust are likely to erode as well.

Resolution of Conflict

While acknowledging that rules are intended to minimize conflict and to support

communication and trust, it is important to remember that rules do not necessarily

preclude discord. Some level of conflict is inevitable in any group dynamic. Its forms,

however, may not always be recognized; they can vary with the ways in which conflict is

managed. Although the idea of conflict evokes an immediate negative response, conflict

can actually be salutary in social interactions. It can provoke thought, facilitate

communication, elicit creative resolutions, and ultimately increase communication and,

thus, productivity.

Where conflict is clearly based on competition, team members may rigidly hold to

their position, refusing to budge from personally held perspectives (Muchinsky, 2003).

They may point out flaws in other members' views, emphasize the strengths in their own,

and doggedly concentrate on changing the minds of other team members instead of

considering the merits of opposing views. In contrast, beneficial conflict, conceived of as

"situations where two or more members have opposing ideas and interests but are

motivated to understand the views and interests of the other" (p. 292), can increase

rapport between members, promote learning, and elicit commitments to work together on

problems in the long term.

Obviously, teams are formed to promote some positive endeavor. Although disagreements and inflexibility on issues or tasks of mutual importance may be expected to arise from time to time, these are not anticipated to override cooperation. Nonetheless, Levine and Moreland (2004) show that productive conflict is not always easily realized. In fact, in many instances it may prove altogether unachievable. The factors involved in a group's ability to collaborate and reach consensus may be as varied as the groups themselves. The history of the group or the personal style of the leader, for instance, can influence whether members come to regard themselves more as part of a unit, sharing mutual goals, than as individuals, each with a personal agenda. When emotional responses are driven by extreme cognitive conflict, the negative ramifications for within-group beneficial conflict are great. Members may abandon considering other points of view, interaction between members may become more strained, and—even when there is enthusiasm about projects or outcomes—group membership may dissolve.

The moderating role that conflict resolution plays in specific intra-group conflicts has been widely studied by social psychologists. Taken distinctly, two types of conflict, process and relationship, have consistently been found to have negative impacts on group outcomes. However, the research on task conflict within groups has not produced uniform findings with reference to either task commitment and performance, on one hand, and heightened in-group distraction and relationship conflicts, on the other (see Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008). Behfar et al. (2011) have differentiated process conflict from other types of conflict, with workload distribution and resource allocation as but

two of its cornerstones. The researchers tested scales of process conflict, in part, to assess long-term group functionality, otherwise known as "group viability" (p. 155). They found that a particular type of process conflict, *contribution conflict*, which involves differences related to the group members involved rather than the tasks, not only influences member behaviors but has a substantial impact on a group's coordination—of people as well as tasks. Undoubtedly, contribution conflict can also be tied to a deterioration in trust: if team members perceive their time or effort expended on a team as greater than that of others, procedural justice will be compromised as well (e.g., Muchinsky, 2003; Schroeder et al., 2003).

In exploring how and when process, task, and relationship conflicts are resolved, Greer, Jehn, and Mannix (2008) note considerable variations in the effects of group performance and communication. A fundamental finding of their research is that process conflict has a particularly negative effect on other types of conflict. This is especially true when this conflict emerges early on in a team's life, yet this effect can be minimized if group members resolve to address the issues early on as well. By anticipating the problems and ways of dealing with them, members can shape long-term team stability.

The reference to early addressing of issues leads to another aspect of conflict resolution: timing. The point at which conflicts are dealt with has clear implications, especially for newly established work teams. Trust and communication, fostered early, have been shown to be central for maintaining group commitment and cooperation. Team members are less likely to take personally divergences in opinions when respect has come about through positive resolution of conflicts (Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008). In

their examination of how collaborative groups are formed and dissolved, Levine and Moreland (2004) confirm this view. Unresolved conflict, including that involving processes, has the potential to make members (especially new ones) feel devalued or nonessential. Unsettled disputes are also a powerful factor in group dissolution, sometimes prematurely—even before group goals have been established.

So, how might teams resolve such conflicts? Callanan, Benzing, and Perri (2006) looked at various conflict-handling strategies that teams employ relative to individual conflict-management styles. The "contingency view" (p. 272), for which theory the authors found support, is well documented but is beyond the scope of this paper. In essence, though, the researchers showed that whether individuals employ competitive, collaborative, compromising, avoidant, or accommodating styles to settle their own concerns, they may in a team setting deviate from those orientations. Surprisingly, the researchers found that, rather than consistently relying on their individual prevailing inclinations, team members tended to give social cues and contextual aspects good consideration when determining how conflicts within teams should best be resolved.

As Muchinsky (2003) states, "what matters is how the conflict is dealt with in the team, as well as the team's attitude about conflict" (p. 292). In short, work group members would do well to assess the significance of conflict issues, alongside their (perceived) team roles, to arrive at the methods of resolution most appropriate for their team. When this approach is followed, and when it occurs early on, team function and interaction can remain positive.

Efficacy in Groups

Tindale et al. (2001) present a definition of collective efficacy derived from well-known work by Bandura (1997, as cited in Tindale et al., 2001): "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 15). In organizations, collective (versus self-) efficacy has been shown to be positively related to work-group performance, cooperation, and motivation.

The concept of collective efficacy has been explored in numerous contexts, most notably in social-dilemma situations. For example, Kerr and Park (2001) have examined how beliefs about the efficacy of cooperation are influenced by different facets of social dilemmas. The authors propose that group size may play a role (positive as well as negative) and that, in cases where individuals have already made up their minds that cooperation is not an essential element of work-group effectiveness ("illusions of inefficacy," p. 121), groups may be unable to resolve their impasses and members may defect. This is very much in keeping with Levine and Moreland's (2004) concern that team members may believe their views or actions do not carry weight when conflicts are left unresolved. It also underscores the importance of continuous and open communication to facilitate cooperation in social-dilemma situations (i.e. Balliet et al., 2009).

Other factors may dictate different views of efficacy within teams, including members' roles within those teams or their positions in the larger organizational structure. The work of DeRue et al. (2010) looked at sources of dispersion in team

efficacy that can have an impact on members' attitudes about team effectiveness. One source of dispersion is related to processes of social interaction, including such social dynamics as communication and coordination. *Shared efficacy*, a form of efficacy dispersion, is defined as "a lack of variability among team members' efficacy beliefs" (p. 9). On the surface, that might imply that collective efficacy is strong, and that individuals' concerns about the importance of their contributions are alleviated (e.g., Tindale et al., 2001; Kerr & Park, 2001). Indeed, the authors present a number of strengths of shared efficacy situations, including enhanced trust, mutually high performance goals, and increased team member connections. Yet dispersion arises when shared efficacy is not high; if low at a team level, then it is likely that individual team members share these beliefs as well.

Even when shared efficacy is high, additional issues can impede team functioning. For teams that have been together for a long time, their shared state (low or high) may bring about complacency (DeRue et al., 2010). In other words, if success or failure has consistently defined the group, members may not see a need to think differently or and accept their level of work-group performance and cooperation (strong or weak) as the established norm. On the whole, though, team longevity has decidedly beneficial aspects, including mutual commitments to continually contribute in creative and flexible ways. This is particularly true when trust is strong and conflicts are resolved effectively (see Muchinsky, 2003; Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008).

A recent study conducted by Tasa, Sears, and Schat (2011) bolsters the literature on collective efficacy, highlighting its importance in work team settings. Examining both

individual personality variables (agreeableness, for example), and interpersonal behaviors, the authors find a strong moderating effect of efficacy on both. On the whole, they support that group-level perceptions of capability influence not only individual traits and behaviors, but the relationship between both. Insomuch as trust is good then, communication quality within teams will also be strengthened, and this too can positively impact how member efficacy beliefs come together (DeRue et al., 2010). In the following sections, intra-group dynamics such as these will be reviewed from historical and current perspectives within a host of criminal justice contexts.

Social Psychology and the Criminal Justice System

The study of criminal justice environments was once considered almost solely the domain of criminologists, whose charge was to determine and then analyze the principal influences on crime and criminal behaviors from their perspective. In recent years, however, analysis of the criminal justice system has dramatically expanded to include applying psychological theories to these milieus. Initially, social researchers concentrated their attention on individuals, speculating about their cognitive or emotional states or motivations. Police and other law-enforcement officers came to be evaluated according to psychological theories regarded as fundamental, in areas ranging from employment-selection criteria, to ongoing evaluations for fitness (including personality characteristics and attitudes), to motivations and individual needs associated with their chosen occupation (Lurigio & Skogan, 1994).

Determinants of personal- and group-decision outcomes, as well, began (and continue) to be widely studied. As an example, Greenberg and Beach (2004) examined

the individual processes that underlie the decisions of crime victims. Among other variables, the researchers were interested in how social influences affect victims' decisions to report property offenses. Using a large community sample, the authors analyzed how frequently victims seek advice from others, such as friends and family members, on whether to inform police of these offenses. Greenberg and Beach were able to establish that social factors were significant in individuals' decisions to notify police of their victimization—more than other factors (i.e. affect, cognition). The authors offered their findings as "rather striking evidence for the existence of a socially driven process of reporting" (p. 185), and this study indeed emphasizes the weight that such social dynamics carry in decision making.

From a historical perspective, the predominant focus of early literature on psychology and justice is on individual decision makers, rather than groups. Kerr (1983) considered much of this work as important to broadening understanding of such factors as attribution and social exchange in a largely understudied and even misunderstood system. Yet he recognized voids in the research. First and foremost, early studies tended to be largely theoretical (versus empirical) in scope. Additionally, limiting understanding of decision making to only discrete subgroups produced results that were insufficient for real-world application and change. Kerr called for looking at a variety of actors as well as broad-based groups in the criminal justice system. Only then could true scientific awareness of the array of influences on decision making be gained.

Judges have long been the central, and sometimes exclusive, source of studies dedicated to learning more about the justice system. Undoubtedly, understanding of the

judiciary is essential. These positions hold the principal decision-making function in many criminal justice environments. Social research has therefore analyzed everything from demographics (such as race and sex) to political leanings (conservative, liberal) so as to explain the relationships of these variables to how judges form national policies as well as render individual verdicts (see Ward, Farrell & Rousseau, 2008; Haynes, Ruback & Cusick, 2010). However, although judges are in regular contact with many integral players (e.g., probation officers, lawyers), these participants have often been examined primarily to the extent that their beliefs, actions, or behaviors were correlated with those of the judge.

An investigation, conducted by Ebbesen and Konečni (1975), of what information judges received and how they used that information to set and determine bail in felony courts illustrates the importance of such early lines of inquiry. Specifically, their research thoroughly examined decision processes of judges in bail hearings in San Diego, California. Building on "information integration theory" (p. 806), the researchers concentrated on how social information that judges received informed how they viewed different defendants' situations and decided on bail amounts. Remarkably, such sociodemographic factors as ties to their local communities and criminal-record histories did not appear to hold sway with the judges' final decisions. Instead, Ebbesen and Konečni report, bail-setting decisions were made by judges based almost completely on recommendations by district attorneys in those courts. Less directly, but no less noteworthy, were the positions of defense attorneys.

When multiple players have been the focal point of research in courtroom

settings, the effects across two groups or individuals have frequently been the chosen

units of analyses. Wrightsman, Greene, Nietzel, and Fortune (2002) highlight research

that further lends credence to the conviction that others with decision-making functions

give information provided by attorneys. Multiple studies have been designed and

conducted to assess what, if any, effect attorneys' opening statements have on jurors'

verdict decisions. Much like Ebbesen and Konečni's (1975) findings with judges, the

conclusion of the authors is that verdicts are strongly influenced by lengthy statements

(rather than brief introductions) of prosecuting or defense attorneys.

Although much social psychological investigation in the 1970s and 1980s

attended to moderators of judicial decisions (see Kerr, 1983), the field has grown since

then to encompass decision making—and related processes and interactions—with other

actors holding pivotal roles in the court setting. Tindale, Nadler, Krebel, and Davis's

(2001) extensive review of the research on juries through 2000 emphasizes this view. The

authors considered not only procedural influences in jury decision making; they

appraised pretrial and during-trial influences as well. One notable discussion is tied to the

background on jury size and suggests that the size of a jury may be modestly related to

verdicts rendered. Even when individual jurors are inclined toward not-guilty verdicts,

small jury groups are more likely to convict than large jury groups; yet when individuals

in that group lean toward guilty verdicts, small juries are less likely than large juries to

convict defendants as guilty.

Similarly, the authors (Tindale et al., 2001) presented the relationship that exists

between group size and how juries make decisions about monetary awards in trials. They

posit that larger jury groups (conceived of as comprising 12 persons) would probably award smaller awards than small (6-person) juries. In part, this could be a function of larger, more recent societal views, which increasingly frown on or question large damage awards. This inclination is also, however, a function of the relationship of the group itself: pro-normative behavior is advanced more strongly in larger groups, which tend to have more intense types of engagement than smaller groups—both within and outside the criminal justice system. Thus, it would not be unexpected that within-group communications might more strongly support group decisions to make smaller awards.

Much like Kerr (1983), Tindale et al. (2001) concluded with a call for future research that moves beyond sole-juror units of analysis and looks at juries as full, interacting groups. As if in response to their request, Schkade, Sunstein, and Kahneman (2002) determined to examine processes related to jury-group decision making versus individual juror judgments. They specifically examined the role of discussion by the larger group in overcoming individual biases. What they found lays stress to the importance of understanding such within-group communication. Notably, such deliberations produced what was termed a "severity shift" (p. 49) in verdicts that involved monetary awards, with punitive awards made by juries that engaged in deliberations substantially higher (83 percent) than the median expected amounts of individual jurors.

In sum, this brief review does not purport to be exhaustive—or to synthesize the wealth of literature on the subject that has so advanced the social sciences. The background on how psychological constructs have been applied in criminal justice

environments is intended purely to provide a setting for additional factors that could be linked to previous study conclusions. Although specific social dynamics such as trust or communication were not variables directly investigated in this research, these are surely components that might be considered in greater depth, given the social-influence findings presented. For that reason, attention to within-group communications has been noted in the discussions of jury size and verdict decisions presented by Tindale et al. (2001) and Schkade, Sunstein, and Kahneman (2002), since it has been shown that the most fruitful communication and cooperative behaviors are often found in groups of moderate size, such as these (see Balliet, 2009). Also plausible is the view that these groups developed strong collective efficacy. The size of such groups has been connected to the extent to which they cooperate (Kerr & Park, 2001); consequently, these jury members may have determined to work effectively as a group in response to the social dilemmas they surely faced (balancing personal beliefs and formal guidelines in determining awards).

As will be elaborated on in the following sections, the dynamics in courtroom contexts—chiefly, the ability to understand the relevance of this background in courtroom groups—call for deeper exploration. Such groups—having diverse players who have distinct responsibilities and generally work in proximity to each other to meet established system goals—are often usually more complex in nature than the basic work groups discussed so far.

Courtroom Groups

Researchers exploring courtroom environments have been largely guided by the seminal work of Eisenstein and Jacobs (1977, as cited in Knepper & Barton, 1997; Ward,

Farrell & Rousseau, 2008; Haynes, Rubick & Cusick, 2010), who established the concept

of the "courtroom workgroup," noting the uniqueness of this type of group from others in

different organizational structures. No matter the thrust of their studies, experts agree on

central tenets of the courtroom work group model, including that individuals who make

up the courtroom work group have a shared workplace and frequent interactions (Haynes,

Rubick & Cusick, 2010), have interdependent relationships with others in the courthouse,

both informal and formal (Ward, Farrell & Rousseau, 2008), and have the ability to

compromise and cooperate because of their shared perceptions of how to treat and

dispose of cases in their courts (Knepper & Barton, 1997).

Numerous analyses of the social, organizational, and cultural processes of such

distinct work groups have thus also relied on Eisenstein and his colleagues' (1988, as

cited in Ulmer & Kramer, 1998) highly regarded position that *court communities* exist.

This theory has at its core an emphasis on the constant interactions and high levels of

interdependence of members of the courtroom work group. Because of the diversity and

collectivity of its members, as well as a localized setting, Ulmer and Kramer (1998)

perceive courts to be "communities of action and communication" (p. 251), in keeping

with the court community framework. In brief, in larger public communities with defined

geographic boundaries, there are obviously differing social structures; likewise,

individuals in various roles are involved in the court community, so there is bound to be a

range of perspectives involved in court decision making (Ward, Farrell, & Rousseau,

2008). It is equally likely that there may be alterations over time to factors like

"community" membership and permanency (see Ulmer & Kramer, 1998; Haynes et al.,

2010).

Studies on Court Group Behaviors and Influences

To understand the impact that member mobility within court groups may have, one can start by considering research conducted in the 1970s that endeavored to assess the difference in behaviors exhibited between permanent members of the Washington State judiciary and temporary members (the latter substituting because of conflicts of interest or the illness of permanent members). Walker's (1973) investigation, which highlights early attempts to understand within-group roles and related variances in group compliance and viewpoints, focused solely on judges; however, these judges worked within the state's Supreme Court as a group charged with reaching unified decisions. In his research Walker found that new judges in temporary positions were likely to avoid conflict and dissent with the group majority. Permanent members of the judicial teams, on the other hand, relegated the less-important tasks to temporary members, viewing the substitutes as less essential to their cohesive team and less relevant than permanent members to the decision-making process.

More recent research on the courtroom group has also considered longevity as a component of group makeup. In their examination of sentencing decisions in a large number of Pennsylvania counties, Haynes et al. (2010) included not only judges but district attorneys as well. The researchers put forward that, besides member similarities and physical proximity, the stability of the work groups would have an effect on decision making related to either the imposition on defendants of fines or incarceration. The expectation was that the more stable of these work groups would make consistent

decisions across both pre- and post-statutory timeframes.

In Haynes et al.'s (2010) study, stability was measured as the number of years, in an eleven-year period, during which each jurisdiction's judges and district attorneys worked together and thus had histories of social interaction with one another. The researchers concluded that, overall, sentencing decisions were influenced by certain courtroom-group characteristics. The more stable the work groups, the less likely they were to impose fines or restitution. Further, even though Pennsylvania had undergone a statutory change in 1995, making restitution mandatory, the most stable group (averaging 9 years together) was almost 70 percent less likely to impose these charges than the least stable group (averaging 1.3 years). In other words, the most stable group appeared substantially more prone to apply its own informal decision-making criteria to cases.

Data on the enactment of established sentencing guidelines in Pennsylvania by specific court work groups was also gathered by Ulmer and Kramer (1998). These researchers were interested in how deeply larger system policies and structure were embedded within the local group-level cultures and to what degree this integration would affect decision making. Using observational and interview data from three different-sized criminal courts, they used specific social and organizational factors—including membership stability—related to Eisenstein et al.'s (1977, as cited in Ulmer & Kramer, 1998) court-community framework. Notably, the authors included another set of important justice system agents: although predominantly informed by judges and prosecuting and defense attorneys, their research drew on information from probation officers involved in the courts.

The courts examined exhibited different degrees of stability within their work groups. Not only did cohesiveness have an influence on consensus and relationships between representative roles; the roles that group norms played were vastly dissimilar. One court in a large, metropolitan area, for example, showed the least amount of stability in its court work group; there were different levels of collegiality between specific roles, but frequent staff turnover in the district attorney's office in this area prevented sustained group interaction with those prime positions. As part of a large bureaucratic county, the court group largely adhered to the State's formal sentencing guidelines, with hardly any local variations in its decisions. Interestingly, the court located in the smallest county, which allowed for a great degree of familiarity among members, also confronted ideological and social conflicts that appeared to prevent the court work group from functioning as a true "community." Thus, the group leaned toward reliance on formal sentencing guidelines, though some members challenged codes and called for decision-making options. The medium-sized suburban court members exhibited the greatest level of stability and familiarity. Formal sentencing guidelines were least embedded in this group, demonstrating that members had fairly consistent sentencing goals and made decisions more in keeping with their group norms.

Considerations of Courtroom Social Dynamics

In these important but fairly limited types of court groups, decision making has been largely investigated as related to the area of sentencing. This fact points to a number of important points to digest and a number of vital social psychological elements to reflect on. First, Walker's (1973) research showed that both permanent and temporary

judges were clearly concerned with group member compliance. However, permanent judges differed from the temporary judges in what they concluded to be the latter group's responsibilities. It is conceivable that this confusion not only prevented effective court group coordination but that it actually generated pervasive conflicts. Behfar et al. (2011) have explained that a team's failure to establish solid role and workload expectations can aggravate conflict and stunt efforts to resolve it. Since permanent judges regularly used their positions to delegate lower-level assignments to temporary judges and simply expected compliance with their established group norms (Walker, 1973), it is possible that the permanent judges were more concerned with their own "coordination rules" (see Schroeder et al., 2003) than with maintaining standards of fairness and establishing communicative relationships. In addition, because they had served as permanent judges for some time, their high level of shared efficacy may have contributed to complacency, providing another barrier to acceptance of opinions from those whose different roles might bring about potentially divergent perspectives (see DeRue et al., 2010).

The implications of Walker's (1973) study also suggest why it is essential to consider the length of time that members have been part of a courtroom work group. In terms of sentencing, Haynes et al. (2010) demonstrated that the most stable court groups used their own informal rules when arriving at group decisions to impose fines or restitution. The findings of Ebbesen and Konečni (1975), presented earlier, were similar. They showed that judges setting bail amounts were less concerned with objective, external data, such as the criminal histories of defendants, than with recommendations from attorneys with whom they were familiar. When group norms were strongly

embedded in the court work groups studied by Ulmer and Kramer (1998), they had considerable influence on sentencing decisions made by the more stable courts. Longstanding relationships of all system players could therefore be linked to effective communication and frequent member interaction. As suggested in the psychological dynamics discussion (and implicit in all of these studies), long-term group stability contributes to the resolution of conflicts and suggests that significant time has been spent in fostering trust between members (see Muchinsky, 2003; Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008).

Finally, throughout the research, key themes from the social psychological literature emerge that are consistent with the tenets of Eisenstein and Jacobs's (1977; as cited in Ward, Farrell & Rousseau, 2008) courtroom workgroup theory, particularly as it relates to the interdependencies of court group members. Haynes et al. (2010) explain that judge and attorney interdependence accounts for variances in many sentencing outcomes. Such reliance on others in organizational settings is a central component of unified teams, as established by McGrath and Argote (2001). Conversely, the knowledge that member-resource relations were finite in Walker's (1973) permanent-versus-temporary-judges scenario could imply that both sets of judges believed that, since their work together had time limits, these groups were not true work *teams* but project-specific work *crews* (see McGrath & Argote, 2001). In all settings, varying degrees of interdependence were undoubtedly responsible for the different priorities (regarding coordination and trust in decision-making efforts) of judges, attorneys, and other court actors (see DeRue et al., 2010).

Broadened Courtroom Group Contexts and Goals

Whereas early research on working groups in courts focused only on those who rendered sentencing decisions in court, more recent studies have been expanded to include other principal court influences.

As an example, Knepper and Barton (1997) have used "courtroom workgroup" concepts, particularly the collectivity of group decisions, in their investigation into the role that work group dynamics play in policy changes. Addressing reforms that were to be expected under Public Law 96-272—which provides for judicial oversight of court proceedings involving children in state care (with the goals of encouraging family reunification and preventing removal from home)—the authors examined how juvenile court judges used their authoritative positions in decision making. However, rather than rely on information from a single group source (a.k.a. judges), the researchers collected both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of decision makers tied to the Kentucky Court Improvement Project, which required the state to implement reforms based on thorough assessments of court proceedings. Specifically, they used information obtained from guardians *ad litem* and court-appointed special advocates, circuit clerks, and chairs of foster care review boards—in addition to that supplied by circuit and district judges.

Categories central to measuring the decisions of courtroom work groups—including socialization, shared decision making, and shared norms, as outlined by David Neubauer (1996, as cited in Knepper & Barton, 1997)—were employed as measures. The research showed, among many notable findings, that although judges clearly had the

formal authority to implement changes, they often did not do so, preferring to rely on recommendations from caseworkers and others in the group. In terms of group norms, trust and cooperation between social services and court staff was emphasized as vital to making decisions on child welfare that supported the Public Law 96-272 reforms. However, informal norms that guided actual practices were glaringly obvious as well. For example, whereas the reforms called for court compliance in making "reasonable efforts" (p. 289) to prevent child removal from the home, judges and other court personnel alike cited court dockets that had to be cleared every day, the import they ascribed to cooperative behaviors and trust in one another's roles, and the information exchanged as justification for alignment with their group objectives—which the group believed superseded the reform goals of achieving permanency. In addition, they suggested that to modify their informal goals could also produce conflict and change their existing measures of daily success.

Reform in the juvenile-justice sphere was also analyzed by Gebo, Stracuzzi, and Hurst (2006). They looked largely at how proposed policy changes could be stymied by courtroom members' perceived confidence in their work group membership. The proposed reform was tied to providing alternatives to detention for juveniles and included the implementation of risk assessment instruments (RAI) that, in theory, would provide information on youths' offense histories. This objective information, in turn, would help group members to evaluate youths' risks for recidivism and to make appropriate recommendations for alternative programs. The study contains distinctive aspects: First, because they were examining work groups in juvenile courts (as were Knepper and

Barton, 1997) rather than adult criminal courts, special considerations had to be addressed, particularly that group goals might be established from a different platform—not just through determination of monetary damages or length of incarceration, but through the conviction of group members that their prime goal was the youths' best interests). The study also included court players representing different justice-system roles, including probation and police officers, who were critical to the daily operations of the courts. Gebo, Stracuzzi, and Hurst's (2006) work is especially noteworthy in that it examined policy reform called for by specific court members (the judiciary), rather than legislative bodies that are more removed from the system.

Across four counties (both urban and rural) in a northeastern state, semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the perceptions that courtroom work group members had of this "street-level initiative" (Gebo, Stracuzzi & Hurst, 2006, p. 427), mainly what affected compliance with administration of the RAI. The study established that, for some group members (probation and police officers required to use the RAI), workloads increased. As might be expected, the reform was viewed more negatively by these group members, who tended to report that the tool did not work or was too limited in scope. Conversely, other members' workloads (judges in particular), were effectively decreased as a result of the new process expectations—although they did not report this, they would have fewer detention requests or detention hearings to conduct—with 70 percent of judges indicating that the RAI was effective in addressing reform goals.

Issues related to confidence in group membership were also illuminated, with

members who relayed that they trusted their group members demonstrating higher

confidence in their groups and greater likelihoods of viewing reform efforts in a positive

light (Gebo, Stracuzzi & Hurst, 2006). Members of a court who lacked this assurance not

only held less positive views of the reforms and the RAI but demonstrated negative views

of other personnel, offering statements about how "new" staff made things challenging

(p. 429). The implications cannot be understated: with respect to the literature on low

stability on work groups (see Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008 as an example), that length of

involvement in these court groups was even mentioned in passing suggests that

perceptions of strength of membership may be correlated to perceived levels of trust,

communication, and fairness. It is easy to conceive that those with low confidence in

their member standing would also doubt their ability to work through such barriers with

the group.

Castellano (2009) introduced a new set of courtroom actors to the body of social

and legal research. Using jail-alternative programs as a backdrop, the author was able to

examine the role of judicial-system caseworkers who had important decision-making

functions in the court group—and were influential in the decisions made by others—but

who were not from the justice or legal professions traditionally associated with courtroom

work groups. Those in caseworker positions often have much more direct engagement

with defendants themselves and do not rely on files or offense data alone in making

recommendations. In certain courts, caseworkers are involved directly with defendants

throughout the decision-making process. Thus, these court group members remain in

contact with defendants even beyond the point at which decisions have been made either

to send defendants to programs (that provide services such as clinical or behavioral

modification treatment) or to incarcerate them.

In Castellano's (2009) study, three pretrial release programs in California

provided the context in which ethnographic data was collected. The author examined the

authority that the caseworkers held in the court group and the extent to which judges,

attorneys, and others were reluctant or agreeable to sharing power. Philosophical

disagreements, such as beliefs in justice versus swift dismissal of cases, were apparent.

Likewise, structural conflicts were found to raise issues. For instance, judges felt that

they should not be relegated simply to making defendant referrals but that they should, by

virtue of their prevailing decision-making roles in the court, have the right to send clients

directly to programs rather than have to wait for caseworkers to accept their referrals. On

the whole, however, Castellano showed that court members in criminal justice

occupations regularly took caseworker recommendations about defendants seriously.

More importantly, they considered caseworkers trustworthy and important (though

nonlegal) members of the courtroom work group.

Summary and Significance

The dynamics at work in these studies illustrate that certain social-psychological

factors are especially relevant to courtroom-group functioning. Within-group issues of

trust and process conflicts are readily apparent (and explored) in a few of these

investigations. On the one hand, group goals of docket clearing appeared nondivisive and

accepted in Knepper and Barton's (1997) study. Areas in which cooperation or trust were

at issue seem more related to support of or resistance to the State's reform initiative than

to the diverse characteristics or philosophies of group members. Divergent views of the reform implemented in Gebo, Stracuzzi, and Hurst's (2006) study also were in evidence, yet the different perspectives of probation and police officers (negative) and judges (positive) may well have had as much to do with workload-distribution changes as the fact that this reform was put forth by judges themselves. As supported by Behfar et al. (2011), obvious contribution conflicts were at work, and these could ultimately erode trust. Court work group members, who saw their responsibilities change, might also feel devalued. Such feelings might eventually result in less collaboration and even dissolution of the work groups (see Levine & Moreland, 2004).

Castellano's (2009) research, above all, emphasizes how critical solid communication skills are to establishing or changing group opinions. In these courts, caseworkers must convey facts about, for instance, defendants' social networks, credibility, and strengths in a way that persuades group members of the advisability of recommending programs versus jail sentences. At the same time, caseworkers must demonstrate that they themselves are entrenched group members, understanding both formal and informal norms. The ability to position their assessments as contributing to the group decision-making process is critical. Not only might the perceived validity of information convince other group members to alter their initial views and support this new information (see Tindale, Meisenhelder, Dykema-Engblade & Hogg, 2001), but within-group communications between judges, attorneys, and caseworkers could be strengthened, fostering greater information sharing (see Yakovleva, Reilly & Werko, 2010).

The primary consideration to this point is that, even when the boundaries of courtroom work groups have been expanded to include representatives from other sectors, external-versus-collective-interest issues are bound to arise. In the following and final section, specific types of courts—those that rely on groups representing diverse roles and are formed as *teams*—will be reviewed to set the stage for the current study. First, an overview of such specialty courts will be provided. From there, distinct courts, including mental health courts, will be reviewed, in the context from which the current research was conducted.

Mental Health and Other Specialty Courts

Traditional court settings—wherein sentencing decisions were made by a few justice-sector representatives who focused primarily on offenses—remained the standard context for research for many years. However, since the 1980s, national interest in specialty courts has rapidly increased. Alternatively called "problem-solving courts" (Porter, Rempel, & Mansky, 2010), such courts generally include specialized court dockets for specific populations and have broader goals of addressing multiple concerns to reduce rates of reincarceration and public safety. Numerous process and outcome evaluations support the concept of specialty courts as critical vehicles of change for hard-to-serve groups of men and women who are involved in the criminal justice system. These courts also greatly assist jurisdictions as a whole by reducing court dockets and attorney caseloads; enhancing community well-being through formal community monitoring and accountability processes; and decreasing local, state and federal costs through inclusion of multiple system stakeholders committed to a common objective:

using resources efficiently.

The growing body of research on individual and systems-level outcomes being achieved by such courts led to support of these models by many national institutions, which set out to ascertain which components were most essential to their success. Among these, "collaboration among justice and non-justice actors" (Porter, Rempel, & Mansky, 2010, p. 9), nonadversarial interactions, and support of the court culture by court teams are notably consistent characteristics used to define problem-solving or specialty courts. Drug-treatment courts are a prime example: designed as innovative incarceration-alternative programs, these courts are based on best-practice principles established by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) in 1997 and have become a national model for other specialty courts across the country. The following sections provide more in-depth information about such specialty courts and the similarities and differences—in both team composition and court doctrines—that characterize them.

Specialty Court Foundations

Two important legal advancements served as catalysts for the development of courts that appropriately address distinct behavioral health and social concerns. The concept of *therapeutic jurisprudence* provided a conceptual platform from which such specialty courts were developed; at the same time, the national drug court movement examined the actual operations of such specialty courts and informed refinement of those court models (Watson, Hanrahan, Luchins, & Lurigio, 2001).

In the late 1980s, mental health law literature began introducing the concept of therapeutic jurisprudence to suggest alternative ways of considering how therapeutic

outcomes for individuals involved in the criminal justice system were being affected by decisions made in the courts. The field called for examination of the beneficial or detrimental consequences that defendants experienced as a result of systemic factors such as formal rules, legal measures, and the roles of court actors, particularly judges and attorneys (Hora, Schma, & Rosenthal, 1999). Burgeoning social-scientific theories ultimately led to legal experts' recognition that the psychological and social health of justice-involved individuals should be considered alongside legal issues in court proceedings. Porter, Rempel, and Mansky (2010) nicely summarize therapeutic jurisprudence as the paradigm for fostering "a coordinated and remedial response to the underlying service needs of the involved parties, while still upholding the due process rights of all litigants" (p. 2). It thus gained national support as a valuable approach to service delivery in certain courts, particularly those facing staggering numbers of drug-related cases.

National policies tied to hard-line stances on illegal drug use had played a significant role in unprecedented prison overcrowding and incarceration rates for decades (Lurigio, 2008). The effects were widespread and had negative ramifications for virtually every point in the criminal justice process. Court dockets were especially overburdened by rising caseloads. At the same time, drug-involved offenders were repeatedly reappearing in these courts, calling attention to the growing concern that current policies were not adequate to retard the escalating cycle of drug-use crime. In response, specialized drug courts were implemented to improve case-processing efficiency. Subsequent iterations of these courts then embraced more team-oriented approaches,

incorporating treatment and recovery support services with other justice strategies, including graduated sanctions, judicial investment in recovery, and frequent contact between clients and court staff (see NADCP, 1997; Olson, Lurigio & Albertson, 2001).

The scientific community was instrumental in this progress, contributing to dispelling ingrained perceptions of drug use as governed by individual choice. Scientists provided education on addiction that identified it as a chronic brain disease that can promote risky and even criminal behaviors (Lurigio, 2008). With proper supports, including treatment, defendants with these substance-use disorders would not only be healthier citizens but would be less likely to be rearrested or reincarcerated. In short, the drug court model elevated the national dialogue on shifting from set legal and adversarial court protocols to adopting more rehabilitative philosophies. These changes paved the way for consideration of other specialty courts, particularly mental health courts, which align with drug court goals in meeting the needs of individuals who show signs of psychiatric illness (Fulton-Hora, 2002).

Unique Elements of Mental Health Courts

Bolstered by the established successes of drug treatment courts, advocates, clinicians, and academic experts in law and social sciences made national appeals for the development of cross-disciplinary programs that could respond to the complexities of offenders with mental health disorders (Lurigio, 2011). Like drug-involved offenders, individuals with mental health issues were flooding the criminal justice system at alarming speed; many were also ending up in drug treatment courts.

Studies estimate that more than half of prison or jail inmates have some form of

mental health disorder (James & Glaze, 2006)—significantly higher percentages than those seen in the general population. Given new research that emerges every day, these data can be deemed conservative. For example, Steadman et al. (2009) have shown that, in a span of five years or so, an unheard-of number (31 percent) of women present some form of serious mental illness at the time of jail admission. Therefore, calls for tailored court programs grew from awareness that, while important, existing specialty courts were ill-equipped to address the multifaceted needs of these vulnerable groups. Moreover, these courts were often limited in scope, focused on certain aims of specialized courts as a whole, and gave limited attention to the need for tailored programming that comprehensively addressed distinct cultural aspects of participants' serious mental health issues. The problems faced by this population, in addition to changes to court goals and processes, were more extensive health and social concerns requiring specific clinical and legal expertise—which would in all likelihood alter the structure of courtroom teams already in place.

The flow into the criminal justice system of those identified as coping with mental illness has presented significant community and system challenges. Thus, like drug and other specialty courts, mental health courts are designed to address these concerns based on premises and practices that are critical for long-term system and client outcomes. The Council of State Governments (2005) has established Critical Elements of Mental Health Courts, which provide models that necessitate court team interaction and collaboration. The Sequential Intercept Model, as an example, promotes each point of individuals' involvement with the justice system as an opportunity for intervention (Munetz &

Griffin, 2006). The aim is to attend to the clinical needs of defendants at the earliest possible point of contact with them so as to prevent further deterioration of their mental health and deeper progression into the criminal justice system.

Porter, Rempel, and Mansky (2010) succinctly capture some features of mental health courts that distinguish them from other courts working with specific populations. First, individuals with serious mental health disorders may not fully understand information that is relayed to them, particularly that requirements in the mental health court program are intensive and that participation in a program is voluntary. Mental health court protocols therefore account for both ethical and legal limitations associated with coercion of defendants. In addition, using positive sanctions to prevent further jail time is more highly promoted than in other problem-solving courts, in which individuals have less severe and less diverse offenses. Finally, mental health court teams explore a broader range of interventions for participants because members are vested in outcomes beyond recidivism reduction. They also consider increased contact with family members, fewer hospitalizations, medication compliance, and sustained employment, for example. In all regards, then, these court teams are obviously dependent on information from a variety of sources, including those with diverse philosophical bents.

Specialty Courts and Social Dynamics

The changes to group structural and cultural norms in problem-solving courts offered social researchers new avenues of investigation. Olson, Lurigio, and Albertson (2001), for instance, examined how specialty drug courts in Illinois were developed and how they espoused certain key components set forth by the National Association of Drug

Court Professionals (1997). One category of their research that is especially relevant to the current study was dedicated to exploring "drug court workgroup dynamics" (p. 175). The research therefore clustered such elements as the courts' ability to build external partnerships, engage in interdisciplinary education of work group members, and advance a coordinated plan to address court-client progress. Quantitative data from program evaluations as well as observational and direct-interview data were analyzed from three courts in a large urban county in the state.

Notable was the authors' (Olson, Lurigio & Albertson, 2001) concentration on dynamics during the initial implementation periods of each court (the first year), when the court teams were new and the members had possibly never worked together before. This period provided both strengths and challenges for the teams. On one hand, team members asserted that they had learned from members in other roles and had come to appreciate the specialized functions of other members. On the other hand, each court varied in how often its work groups convened, and there were differences in the permanency of team members as well. The court teams that dealt with frequent staff turnover or infrequent meetings, for example, exhibited lags in establishing informal norms and instituting formal goals, both of which had affected the efficiency and cohesiveness of these groups.

The principal consideration of this study was that drug court groups, unlike more traditional courts, include a host of new actors who bring with them diverse skills and experience. In keeping with Castellano's (2009) assessment of the receptiveness that justice-system representatives demonstrated to nonlegal caseworkers joining the court

work group, Olson, Lurigio, and Albertson (2001) also concluded that work group

dynamics are decidedly different in the specialty court realm. The inclusion of members

from various sectors can ultimately enrich communication and broaden perspectives. The

caveat, they warn, is that such frequent and sustained group interaction and information

overload from new sources has the potential to be overwhelming. The authors conclude

that specialized courts must take into account such influences on individual or group

burnout when weighing their need for interconnected and stable work teams.

Waters, Strickland, and Gibson (2009) expand on these issues with their analysis

of extensive fieldwork conducted for The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) in

multiple specialized courts across the country. Delving into the complexities behind

communication in mental health courts was an especially important aspect of the NCSC

study. Using a framework developed by Ostrom and colleagues (2007; as cited in Waters,

Strickland & Gibson, 2009), a mental health court communication model was established,

using four typologies related to court culture in assessing the viewpoints held by various

court members. A "sociability" dimension considered cooperation in social interactions,

and a "solidarity" dimension accounted for agreement on mutual goals and processes.

The overarching intent of this communication model was to ensure that the concerns of

all court team members, no matter their functions, would be incorporated in team

decision making. It was expected that understanding of the influences on such

communication patterns would result in greater cooperation and trust.

This work offers insight on how specific social dynamics may be interwoven with

individual and group roles in mental health courts. Judges, for example, struggle with the

traditional impartiality dictated by their position in a court context that requires active engagement with participants and court team members alike (Waters, Strickland & Gibson, 2009). The judges elaborated that the high degree of information sharing within the group frequently revealed to them that team members had different priorities. Further, team members themselves revealed that they had uncertainties about working with individuals from so many sectors. Even when court goals were supported, members lacked confidence related to their limited experience with issues relevant to other professions (e.g., clinical and justice fields), and they gauged risks to their personal beliefs and professional standings by working in mental health courts. Clearly, the high level of interdependence required of mental health court teams can thus bring with it both conflicts and opportunities for members. The authors conclude that the most effective and collaborative of these teams are those that can balance individual and group interests. Members are called to "leave their hat at the door" (p. 4), to promote nonlinear, multidisciplinary contributions to these teams.

Significance and Current Study Context

The court team is recognized by the national Council of State Governments as one of ten vital components of mental health courts (Thompson, Osher & Tomasini-Joshi, 2007). This group is viewed as a collaborative entity that works toward common goals (of the court and court participants). As such it must include representatives from various professions and from different communities. Ideally, teams should comprise members from the justice sector (judicial officers, prosecution and defense attorneys, probation officers), the human services sector (treatment providers, case managers), and relevant

administrative professionals (such as court coordinators and evaluators). The Council posits the promotion of within-team communication and efficiency as central to court sustainability. Moreover, while judges ultimately preside over these courts, their roles—unlike in more traditional, less-specialized courts—must be expanded to foster collaboration, information sharing, and general *team* participation.

Lurigio (2011) emphasizes that legislation at national, state, and local levels has supported these shifts in thinking and, in recent years, has actually aided efforts not only to attend to individuals repeatedly appearing in the mental health and criminal justice systems, but also to enhance collaboration goals of court teams. This is not to intimate that there are not adverse components in joint efforts. In their study of work group dynamics in drug courts, for instance, Olson, Lurigio, and Albertson (2001) presented findings that warrant caution for those who might see the framework of the specialty court team as a panacea for organizational obstacles. Specifically, they showed a downside to constant sharing of information: that of the team members' struggle to manage information overload, even when acknowledging the importance of that information.

Current Study: Intra-Group Dynamics in Mental Health Courts

Studies that have examined applications of social psychological elements in criminal justice contexts have historically been relegated or limited to individuals or groups of system actors. Mental health courts offer a fresh environment in which to examine intra-group dynamics from an established theoretical and research base on intra-group processes. Given that members of these court teams have prolonged interaction

with court clients and with one another, their roles must assist and complement those of their team members. At the same time, team members must retain their autonomy and ensure that they fulfill their responsibilities to the team.

Work group members' similar or disparate perceptions of in-group trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution have been demonstrated to affect the strength of team bonds to their teams as well as overall decision making processes. In mental health courts, recommendations have been made for informal dialogue on stereotypes, that might increase within-group trust (Waters, Strickland & Gibson, 2009). This may be especially critical in newly established mental health courts inasmuch as group longevity has been shown to influence the ability to manage conflicts effectively (Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008; Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, & Trochim, 2011) and to alleviate concerns about member contributions that affect team efficacy (Tindale et al., 2001; Kerr & Park, 2001).

The current study was not intended to examine the impact of such dynamics on court operations. However, the integration of a team approach to addressing the needs of individuals with mental health disorders (as well as the larger concerns of the community) is a central example of McGrath and Argote's (2001) distinctions between groups in other organizational settings that may be established for time- or project-limited purposes. The principal aim of this research was therefore to examine intra-group dynamics within a relatively new criminal justice setting. Specifically, this study examined social-psychological elements identified in nine established Mental Health Courts in Illinois, representing a geographic mix of urban, suburban, and rural

environments. Four primary questions were addressed:

1. Are the levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution in Mental Health Court teams strong or weak?

2. Are notable differences reported in the levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution based on how long the courts have been in existence?

3. Do members exhibit a wide range of roles (e.g., that of justice system representative, clinical service representative, or administrative representative) in keeping with national mental health court team components?

4. Do team members report different degrees of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution according to their length of involvement in the court programs?

The study of intra-group dynamics within specialized mental health courts presented additional information on a specific work group that is identified by the concept of "team." Although this was an exploratory study, it was expected that knowing how team members perceive the extent to which they relate to each other and share common team goals would enhance understanding of group processes in these settings. Further, initial data on such important variables in social psychology might suggest opportunities for future investigations in the field. The findings might also prompt stakeholders in the Illinois Court System to expand these group-level examinations in other types of courts, generating solutions that would ultimately enhance court team functionality.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

A brief survey was developed to capture additional information from participants taking part in a larger *Study of Mental Health Courts* project evaluating statewide mental health court operations and services provided (funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority [ICJIA]). The pencil-and-paper survey included 20 questions, developed from the social psychology literature on intra-group dynamics. Five central areas of intra-group dynamics were assessed, using four, 5-point rating-scale questions to measure each variable:

- trust (questions 1 through 4)

- communication (questions 5 through 8)

- coordination (questions 9 through 12)

- efficacy (questions 13 through 16)

- conflict resolution (questions 17 through 20)

The survey was administered at the beginning of individual court team focus groups that were held over the course of many months. Although the survey data collected was not utilized to address the separate research questions of the larger study, this tool also served as an important priming function, enhancing the overall focus group process through increased engagement in interview questions and topics such as reasons for joining the team; collaborative processes and effectiveness among Mental Health

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Court (MHC) staff, service providers, community partners, and system stakeholders; the degree of teamwork between MHC staff members; communication within the MHC team; and court team quality.

Procedures

Focus group interview times were set in advance with an MHC official at each court. On the scheduled dates for team-member focus group interviews at MHC sites, a focus group facilitator initially provided an overview of the overall purpose of the Loyola study for participants, which was to provide a comprehensive assessment of MHCs in Illinois. The facilitator then explained that the participants would be asked to complete a brief survey and participate in a focus group session that day, and then MHC team members were asked if they had any questions. After answering questions, the facilitator provided informed consent forms for MHC team members to read and answered any additional questions from the team members. Participants received instructions on how to complete the survey, were informed that participation was voluntary, and were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of individual responses. A phone number for the researcher to call for clarification of any survey items and/or questions about the ICJIA-funded study at a later date was also provided. The facilitator gathered and filed the signed informed-consent forms at the beginning of each session and provided participants with copies for their records. A copy of the informed-consent form for MHC team members is attached in Appendix A.

The mental health court group survey was administered at the start of each focus group and was collected by the facilitator prior to the implementation of the open-ended

interview schedule. No additional identifying information about participants was collected beyond self-identified roles and years in the program. Five central survey areas were presented to assess the degrees of trust, communication, team efficacy, coordination, and conflict resolution that court group members associated with their mental health court teams. Unless otherwise indicated, all items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 being *strongly agree* and 1 being *strongly disagree*. A neutral item was defined by a check in the *neither agree or disagree* category, or a score of 3 on the 5-point scale.

Within the trust variable, four survey items were offered to include both perceptions of openness and support from others as well as capacities to support others. Four survey items were also presented for the communication variable, assessing such factors as feedback, information exchange, and discussion. One statement, "Some members of my team are not very good at communicating," required transposed scale coding (5 being *strongly agree* and 1 being *strongly disagree*), as a result of reversed sentence structure (question 7).

The third survey variable, team efficacy, provided four statements measuring such beliefs as "I can do a good job working with this team," and "My team accomplishes the goals we set for it." Coordination, the fourth variable, considered information on perceptions of members' knowledge about team member roles and where to get information when needed. The final survey variable, conflict resolution, assessed how respondents felt they got along with members of their court team and how they responded to team disagreements. As described for the statement within the communications

variable, one item (question 20) was also negatively worded, so reverse coding was applied to this item.

Research staff entered all survey data into a SPSS database, the statistical software used to store and analyze the data. Survey data was reviewed and cleaned prior to analyses. For purposes of analyses, survey questions assessed in-general statement agreement, with agreement indicated by focus group respondents' selecting *strongly agree* or *agree* categories, and disagreement if they checked *strongly disagree* or *disagree* categories. Across all, a neutral item was defined by a check in the *neither agree nor disagree* category. Two questions (7 and 20) were negatively worded so that reverse coding was necessary for these items; however, equal weighting was the norm for all survey items, so uniform scoring was applied to each response category (see Appendix A for final *Mental Health Court Survey*).

The following methods were used to calculate scores for the scales and tables in this report:

1. Across jurisdictions, an average (mean) score was calculated for each of the five central survey variables.

2. Across jurisdictions, average (mean) scores were calculated for all items within each scaled variable.

3. For each court jurisdiction, an average (mean) score was calculated for each of the five central survey variables.

4. For each court jurisdiction, average (mean) scores were calculated for all items within each scaled variable.

Note: "Missing" values were considered null and were excluded from the results by zeroing out of adjusted totals when calculating variables so that missing cases did not result in scores of zero.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Ten focus groups were held in nine statewide mental health court jurisdictions
(two focus groups were held on separate dates in one court jurisdiction). This resulted in
a total respondent sample of 77 for the present analyses of Mental Health Court group
surveys.

Statistical Treatments: Survey Analysis

Internal consistency of the mental health court survey was measured through
Cronbach's alpha tests. Means and inter-item correlations were studied (with attention
paid to negative correlation patterns), as were item variances. Unless otherwise indicated,
however, only overall reliability statistics and item-total statistics tables from these
analyses have been presented for visual illumination of results and conciseness.

The survey was constructed to measure five social-psychological variables: each
contained four items related to assessing the trust (variable 1), communication (variable
2), team efficacy (variable 3), coordination (variable 4), and conflict resolution (variable
5) that respondents associated with their mental health court teams. Cronbach's alpha for
variable 1 (trust), which gauged agreement with items related to trust of team members,
was found to be highly reliable (4 items; $\alpha = .80$) (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Variable 1 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.800	.798	4

Table 2. Variable 1 Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EXP1	13.62	2.290	.542	.322	.783
SUP2	13.57	2.459	.527	.351	.790
EXPSUP3	13.75	1.846	.731	.557	.687
HON4	13.79	1.877	.673	.483	.720

Variable 2 (communication) also used four items relevant to what respondents agreed or disagreed with in respect their teams' communication methods and information-sharing capacity. The initial Cronbach's alpha results for this variable (α = .61) indicated that removing item 7 (NOCOMM7)—a reverse-coded question related to beliefs about other members' communication abilities—as an item of measurement might modestly improve it, given that it had an item-total correlation value of .25. Based on a marginal increase of .03 (see Tables 3 and 4), the item was not removed, and consistency of this question was determined not to be a concern.

Table 3. Variable 2 Reliability Statistics with NOCOMM7 Removed

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.640	.641	3

Table 4. Variable 2 Item-Total Statistics with NOCOMM7 Removed

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
INFO5	8.87	.983	.554	.307	.383
PROBS8	8.84	.975	.481	.256	.507
EXINFO6	8.47	1.568	.357	.139	.665

Another variable (Variable 3), which gauged strong agreement or strong

disagreement with statements related to team efficacy, fared much better on overall item

consistency. Cronbach's alpha for these items was .87, indicating a fairly high level of

reliability, with the highest-noted inter-item correlation found between team members'

perceptions of their strengths in the team (PERCOM10) and perceptions of team

accomplishments (GOAL11) (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Variable 3 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.867	.871	4

Table 6. Variable 3 Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
MEMCOM9	13.14	2.552	.744	.610	.823
PERCOM10	13.16	2.455	.717	.523	.830
GOAL11	13.53	2.226	.685	.488	.850
TMPERF12	13.26	2.356	.747	.625	.817

As shown in Tables 7 and 8, moderately good consistency was also found for

variable 4 (Cronbach's α = .74), which was designed to examine the strength of

agreement or disagreement respondents showed with respect to team coordination.

Finally, Variable 5 (conflict resolution) included four items related to the level of

agreement or disagreement respondents had with statements related to their teams'

abilities to address conflict. Cronbach's alpha for these items was .84, indicating that this

survey variable too had a fairly high level of reliability (see Tables 9 and 10).

Table 7. Variable 4 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.716	.741	4

Table 8. Variable 4 Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
KNOW13	13.34	2.201	.536	.330	.641
ACCESS14	12.91	2.698	.617	.392	.604
MESH15	13.22	2.469	.421	.221	.718
ROLE16	12.87	2.969	.529	.343	.656

Table 9. Variable 5 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.783	.839	4

Table 10. Variable 5 Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
GETWELL17	12.40	4.691	.702	.707	.703
DISSETT18	12.75	4.162	.654	.520	.698
LIKEMEM19	12.27	4.859	.682	.639	.718
GRUDG20	13.26	3.090	.552	.349	.831

Statistical Treatments: Content Analysis of Statewide Results

This study's participants indicated that Illinois's mental health courts are composed of teams with members from multiple disciplines holding various roles. The justice sector (e.g., judiciary, prosecution, defense, probation, court personnel) was represented by 58% of respondents ($n = 45$), followed by 35% ($n = 27$) direct services system representatives (e.g., treatment, case management, community services), and 7% ($n = 5$) other system/court roles respondents (e.g., evaluator, referral source, support staff). Table 24 in the Appendix provides a detailed breakout of self-reported roles.

Statewide, 76 team members surveyed indicated wide ranges in lengths of association with their court programs (from 1 month to 8 years), with an overall average of close to 3.5 years ($SD = 2.23$). For example, survey respondents in Court 8 ($n = 10$), one of the oldest courts, represented the broadest range, having been with the MHC anywhere from 6 months to 7 years, for an average length of involvement of just over 5 years ($M = 5.3$, $SD = 2.37$). In Court 5, the second-oldest court and also established in 2004, respondents reported being part of their court team for an average of almost 5 years, reflecting a span of 1.5 years to 7 years ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 2.38$). (See Table 11 for

all means and standard deviations by Court.)

Program involvement was lowest in Court 7, which was established in 2007, with participants ranging from .17 years to 3.25 years (with a mean of almost 1.5 years) in that program ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 1.0$). Program involvement was lowest in Court 7, which was established in 2007, with participants ranging from .17 years to 3.25 years (with a mean of almost 1.5 years) in that program ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 1.37$). In Court 2, which was established in 2007, team members surveyed have been with the court for an average of just over 2 years, representing the smallest length of involvement range, from 1 year to 3 years ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.0$).

Overall, team members across all 9 participating jurisdictions ($N = 76$) have been with the courts for an average of almost 3.5 years, demonstrating a 7.92 range of involvement ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 2.23$).

Table 11. Average Staff Length of Involvement by Court (N=76)

	N	Mean Years in Program	Std. Dev.
Court 1	4	3.0	2.61
Court 2	8	2.2	1.00
Court 3	11	4.9	1.56
Court 4	14	2.8	2.02
Court 5	7	4.8	2.38
Court 6	10	2.8	1.17
Court 7	6	1.4	1.37
Court 8	10	5.3	2.37
Court 9*	6	3.5	2.87

Data missing for one respondent in Court 9

As shown in Table 12, statewide, the majority of jurisdictions indicated high levels of trust ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .46$), and team efficacy ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .52$) within their MHC teams. Mental health court teams also positively *agreed* (scale alphas 4 and 5) with

items assessing the degrees to which their teams were Coordinated ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .52$), resolved conflicts ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .64$), and communicated ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .52$). (Table 14 attached in Appendix B presents full descriptive statistics for each survey item; Tables 15–23 provide means and standard deviations for each subscale by court.)

The overall means for the communication and conflict resolution variables fell within the *agreed* scoring range, and suggest that participants perceive their team's communication and conflict-resolution abilities positively. Yet within-variable differences imply that those dynamics might be higher statewide. Specifically, there was greater variation in responses to the two reverse-scored statements. The mean for question 7 in the communication variable, which read "Some members of my team are not very good at communicating," was $M = 3.42$ with a $SD = 1.19$. Likewise, question 20 in the conflict resolution variable, which read "Some members of my team hold grudges against other members," had a mean of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.22. The means of the recalculated scores on these items appear to be lower than all other item means (all above 4.10) and the standard deviations larger (all others ranging from .49-.82). Although these questions were reverse scaled to encourage consideration of each statement and responses made according to individual beliefs, the results suggest that some respondent bias was present, as Cronbach's data did not indicate any major inter-item issues.

Table 12. Statewide Response Means by Survey Variable (N=77)

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Trust	4.56	.46
Communication	4.17	.52
Team Efficacy	4.41	.52
Coordination	4.35	.52
Conflict Resolution	4.24	.64

Statistical Treatments: Content Analysis of Jurisdictional Results

Survey responses from individual court jurisdictions highlighted a number of parallels in intra-group dynamics (see Table 13 for an illustration of response ranges for each survey variable and participant numbers for each jurisdiction). For example, trust was reported as high within each MHC, with mean response ranges of 4.14 (SD = .43) to 4.80 (SD = .31), in Courts 5 and 9, respectively. The majority of jurisdictions also considered their level of team efficacy to be strong, particularly Court 3 (M = 4.73, SD = .24). As a whole, with 7 participants, Court 5 reported the lowest levels of intra-group dynamics though they were still relatively robust (M = 3.87, SD = .39); the strongest team dynamics (M = 4.68, SD = .20) were found in Court 3, which participated in 2 focus groups (N = 11), with participants reporting high levels of trust (M = 4.80, SD = .33) as well as team efficacy (M = 4.73, SD = .24) and coordination (M = 4.73, SD = .39). For both courts, the lowest survey-response means fell within the aforementioned variables of communication and conflict resolution. (Tables 15–23 demonstrate the breadth of response frequencies for each court and are included in Appendix B.)

There were dissimilarities as well. Across courts, focus group participant numbers were varied. Court 1, for example, had 4 representatives, whereas Court 4 had 14. In one court (Court 3) two focus groups were held as a result of scheduling constraints of participants for a total court participant N of 11. Individual participant roles and/or roles in the court teams were also different across focus groups. As described, justice sector representatives constituted the majority of survey respondents statewide, in such roles as judges, state's attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, etc. Certain MHC

jurisdictions, however, were notably justice skewed with respect to focus group

participation: of the teams represented for Courts 6 and 8 ($N=10$ in each), 7 participants

reported being in justice system roles, with 2 representatives from direct services and 1

from the "other" category (with equal distributions in both courts). In contrast, fairly even

divisions of justice, services, and/or other system representatives were seen in survey

participants from 2 courts with very different Ns: Court 1 ($N = 4$), had 2 participants from

the justice sector and 2 from direct services, and Court 4 ($N = 14$) had 6 participants from

the justice sector, 7 from direct services, and 2 in other sector roles. In Court 3, where 2

focus groups were held, there was additional role division, with representatives from the

justice sector (4 of 7) predominating in the first focus group and the second focus group

composed primarily of direct services representatives (3 of 4).

Table 13. Survey Variable Averages by Jurisdiction

	N	Trust Mean (SD)	Communication Mean (SD)	Team Efficacy Mean (SD)	Coordination Mean (SD)	Conflict Resolution Mean (SD)	Totals Mean (SD)
Court 1	4	4.63 (.48)	4.31 (.52)	4.50 (.68)	4.69 (.47)	4.81 (.24)	4.59 (.39)
Court 2	8	4.63 (.46)	4.38 (.50)	4.34 (.46)	4.25 (.53)	4.53 (.36)	4.43 (.40)
Court 3 *	11	4.80 (.33)	4.55 (.27)	4.73 (.24)	4.73 (.39)	4.61 (.38)	4.68 (.20)
Court 4	14	4.43 (.47)	3.98 (.43)	4.50 (.54)	4.32 (.50)	4.16 (.59)	4.28 (.42)
Court 5 **	7	4.14 (.43)	3.75 (.66)	3.80 (.47)	3.77 (.40)	3.11 (.59)	3.87 (.39)
Court 6	10	4.33 (.64)	3.73 (.45)	4.08 (.51)	4.13 (.44)	3.90 (.54)	4.03 (.43)
Court 7	6	4.54 (.33)	4.21 (.49)	4.42 (.47)	4.29 (.60)	4.04 (.53)	4.30 (.41)
Court 8	10	4.80 (.23)	4.30 (.44)	4.53 (.43)	4.53 (.34)	4.48 (.45)	4.53 (.30)
Court 9	7	4.82 (.31)	4.50 (.32)	4.68 (.40)	4.46 (.53)	4.57 (.35)	4.61 (.35)

2 separate focus groups held with Court 3
*** In Court 5, there were two specific questions missing by two different respondents. When calculating variable scores and overall scores, these cases were zeroed out of adjusted totals so that a missing case did not result in a score of zero.*

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The intent of this research was to gain insight into key social psychological

constructs in an unexplored work group context: one that is premised on true *team*

structure. The study gathered exploratory information on intra-group dynamics in Illinois

mental health court teams, thus no hypotheses were made about whether team

performance or mental health court outcomes were enhanced or inhibited by such

variables. Instead, the survey results did provide some knowledge about the levels of

trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution within Illinois's

mental health court teams and possible influences, which are summarized here.

Discussion

The first research question was designed to assess the strength or weakness of

overall levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution in

mental health court teams. All court teams reported relatively high levels of trust and

team efficacy, and positively agreed that their capacities for communication,

coordination, and resolving conflicts were solid. There were, of course, within-variable

items that may have affected overall response means and standard deviations in the areas

of communication and conflict resolution. Some items had reverse scaling to encourage

consideration of each survey statement and, even though Cronbach's analyses revealed

that these items did not detract significantly from variable reliabilities, a visual review of

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the actual hard copies of the surveys coupled with these findings does permit the possibility that response-set or acquiescence biases may have occurred.

The study was also interested in whether team members exhibit a wide range of roles in keeping with national mental health court team components. Overall, mental health courts in Illinois appear to be composed of teams with members from multiple disciplines holding diverse roles, based on the breadth of justice-system, direct service, and administrative representatives participating. Statewide, the majority of survey respondents were from the justice sector, but this is not considered unusual, as many roles—judges, prosecution and defense attorneys, probation officers—all align with that sector. Indeed, some more pronounced differences in team roles emerged in individual court jurisdictions, with some court teams notably more skewed toward justice than others. Yet even in the jurisdictions that showed the greatest variations in numbers of team members participating (Court 1 and Court 4, which were represented by four and fourteen team members respectively), the differences in distribution between justice, services, and/or other system representatives were minor.

Although every effort was made to ensure that all nine courts had as many team members participating in this study as possible, it is feasible that, in some jurisdictions, certain team members were not committed to taking part in this effort or that there were differences in how vested members were in their own teams. Particularly for courts represented by smaller teams, it is far more likely that this disparity was due to schedule constraints and conflicting responsibilities that prevented member participation in the lengthy focus groups that were convened as part of the larger Loyola research study. On

the whole, though, team composition in Illinois's mental health courts does seem to support national Council for State Government requirements of multiple-sector representation (Thompson, Osher & Tomasini-Joshi, 2007).

Another aim of this work was to determine whether differences in these intra-group variables were a function of how long the courts had been in operation. No notable differences were found, however. As research has shown, it is conceivable that teams in more longstanding courts would demonstrate at least slightly higher overall averages on the survey variables than other courts, inasmuch as team longevity would enhance member commitments and contributions (see Muchinsky, 2003; Greer, Jehn & Mannix, 2008). This was not the case, however. The strongest overall team dynamics were in fact found in the court that represented the mid-range of years since courts had been instituted in this study (Court 3). The "youngest" court, which had been operational for slightly less than two years at the time of this study (Court 9), also had similarly strong overall team dynamic means.

Consideration was similarly given to whether the length of time that team members had been involved with their court programs might have influenced the team dynamic levels that each court team reports. Across all nine jurisdictions team members reported varied lengths of association with their mental health court programs (from one month to eight years), with an overall average of close to three and a half years. Members in the two "oldest" courts, for example, had been involved in the program for approximately five years, on average. Not unexpectedly, teams in two more recently established courts had shorter lengths of member involvement (on average, one and a half

to two years).

In all instances, team stability in these courts could be considered as having the potential to have a negative impact on overall social dynamics, given that work teams are especially vulnerable to changes in membership (McGrath & Argote, 2001). Such an effect could be particularly apparent in the two oldest courts, which also demonstrated the greatest range of years in existence, with some members having been involved in the court teams for months and others since the court programs were implemented. Teams in the newer courts did not exhibit any striking differences in the range of member involvement that might imply substantial changes within the team.

All things considered, stability issues did not appear to be impeding intra-group dynamics. Even though one of the oldest courts (Court 5) reported the lowest levels of intra-group dynamics statewide, all of the courts were still demonstrably strong, indicating that members perceived positively levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution in their team.

This paper provided a brief review of the literature on social-psychological elements associated with work groups and early applications of such in criminal justice contexts. In addition to serving as a priming mechanism for the larger ICJIA-funded study focus groups, the survey and corresponding information gained on intra-group dynamics in the current study allowed for a broader examination of the extent to which mental health court professionals conceive of themselves as part of cohesive teams. There were some boundaries to this study, but the results do highlight that there are areas of future research exploration, both of which are reviewed in the next sections.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. First, it is important to address the actual instrument that was used to gather data related to the research questions. The survey was designed to assess levels of trust, communication, coordination, efficacy, and conflict resolution; and it consisted of statement-agreement questions that were considered to capture these variables. Although efforts were made to ensure that survey items reflected central concepts derived from the literature, including review by professors distinguished for their work in the organizational psychology and criminal justice fields, one conclusion is that the construct- and criterion-related validity of this survey could have been strengthened by more comprehensive information gathering during the conceptualization phase of the study. In addition, statistical tests supported the majority of survey questions as having fairly high levels of reliability. However, a few scale items required some further analysis to ensure that they were not detracting from the results. If this study were to be repeated, data would be gathered from a larger pilot sample for analysis. The instrument might then be refined prior to full administration in confidence that each variable had the strongest possible construct consistency.

The decision to conduct this survey with only those mental health court team members who were available to participate in a longer focus group may be an additional weakness. It appeared that all teams were represented by diverse roles and differing lengths of member involvement, but there is no way to discern whether this interpretation reflected the complete team structure, as not every jurisdiction had the capacity to allow for full teams' participation. Besides this limitation, despite study procedures instituted to

assure of anonymity and confidentiality, response biases were a risk. Not only were focus groups conducted by a researcher unknown to the teams, members participated in rooms with other members who had different power differentials in their respective court cultures. It is unclear, therefore, to what extent individual response biases were eliminated.

Finally, there is no way to determine the relationship histories of team members prior to their involvement in the mental health court structure. This study conceived that length of involvement might be tied to intra-group strengths and barriers. In turn, considerations of team stability were primarily relegated to how long members were part of their teams, with inherent assumptions made that this was their first joint venture. In large urban environments it is likely that the courts were able to draw new members from a wider external pool of justice, human service, and administrative professionals. Yet in some areas, a number of individuals probably had worked together in other court programs or occupational contexts. This may especially be true in smaller, rural jurisdictions, where players may have been entrenched in the justice or direct-service systems for years, well before mental health courts were established in those areas. Thus, although some courts reported broad ranges of member involvement, that fact does not tell the whole story. Familiarity between members before and outside the court work groups may have influenced the conclusions drawn from results of the surveys.

Conclusions and Next Steps

This study shows why understanding of team dynamics in a relatively recent criminal justice milieu is important. Not only does the need for cohesive teams exist, but

the system requires it, because healthy within-team interactions have long-term consequences for vulnerable groups and specialty-court infrastructure as a whole. It is suggested that this type of inclusive-group research be continued and expanded to include multiple court environments (i.e., those in rural, urban, and suburban settings).

Future studies might do well to include social dynamics in their examinations of such specialized work groups. With increasing national attention on developing courts to address the needs of distinct justice-involved populations (e.g., veterans, families), program-evaluation opportunities will be substantially expanded. Examinations of the engagement efforts of court team members, including how often they meet and their physical work settings, should therefore be made. Particularly for these moderately sized work groups, enhancement of trust and communication are strongly tied to close proximity and frequency of interactions (Yakovleva, Reilly & Werko, 2010).

Process and outcome evaluations, as well as applied research studies, might also include assessments of team strengths and openness to change, not only when courts are initially implemented but at different points in programming. Changes in membership and workloads might well influence both client and operational outcomes under study. There are established organizational analysis tools in the field, but many of these were developed for use in for-profit organizations and may not reflect the distinctive court culture. Building on those tools to incorporate social elements such as the ones presented here has strong potential for developing and delivering interventions early to thwart greater team-conflict issues in the long term.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT AND

COURT SURVEY FORMS

Form IC-1: Informed Consent for MHC Team Members
<u>**Consent to Participate in Research Page 1**</u>

Project title: A Study of Illinois Mental Health Courts
Principle Investigator: Dr. Arthur Lurigio

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study funded by the State of Illinois and being conducted by Dr. Arthur J. Lurigio, Professor of Criminal Justice and Psychology at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a Team Member of the Mental Health Court program in your jurisdiction and the study is considering the operational processes of Mental Health Courts (MHCs) in Illinois.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of all MHCs in Illinois.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study you will be asked to participate by filling out a questionnaire and taking part in a focus group interview. You will be asked questions about your work with MHC team members, the creation of the Mental Health Court, its current operations client services, monitoring, and sanctioning, collaborations with criminal justice and community partners, successes and failures of the MHC, and changes to the MHC since it began. The questionnaire will take about ten minutes. The interview questions are just a starting point to get you to discuss all of these issues, and you can feel free to talk about related things that you think are important. You will not be asked to identify any specific individuals with criminal records and you must avoid naming anyone or pointing out anyone as an example.

Risk/Benefits:
Your participation is confidential and we will not disclose your identity or identifying information in any work drawn from this interview. With participation there is a risk that loss of confidentiality can occur, although every effort will be made to keep everything confidential and your name will not be used in the results of this study.

There is no direct benefit that you will receive from participating in this study.

Consent to Participate in Research Page 2

Confidentiality:
Your name will not be written on the questionnaire, interview form, or audio tape (if tape is utilized). Your name will not be included in the results in the final report of this study. Dr. Arthur Lurigio (or an Interviewer working with him) will not disclose your name to anyone reading the report or asking about the report. Dr. Lurigio will store the questionnaires, interview forms and audio tapes, as well as this form which will be the only item with your name on it. These forms and tapes will be kept by Dr. Lurigio in locked files in separate areas and will only be used for this research project. As soon as the audio tapes are typed up by Dr. Lurigio or a Research Assistant working with Dr. Lurigio, the tapes will be erased, taken apart, and thrown away.

Voluntary participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without any negative consequences.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Dr. Arthur Lurigio at (773) 508-3500, or Co-Project Manager Monte Staton at (773) 392-0412.
Mr. Staton can also be reached via e-mail at monostate@yahoo.com.
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Compliance Manager in Loyola's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study by answering interview questions. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____
Researcher's Signature   Date

Optional: By checking the box below and signing my initials I agree to allow the interview to be audio taped.

□   _____

   Initials

Loyola University Chicago: Lakeside Campuses
Institutional Review Board for
The Protection of Human Subjects

Date of Approval: 11/15/2010

Approval Expires: 10/27/2011

Mental Health Court Survey

Role in Mental Health Court Team: _____

Years in Program: _____ Date: _____

1) I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2) I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3) I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4) I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5) I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6) My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7) Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8) If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9) The members of my team are good at what they do.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10) I can do a good job working with this team.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11) My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12) We are a well-performing team.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13) I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14) When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15) The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16) I understand the roles of the other team members.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17) My team members and I get along well.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18) When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19) I like the members of my team.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20) Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSES TABLES 14–24

Table 14. Statewide Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	77	4.62	.56
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	77	4.68	.50
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	77	4.49	.64
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	77	4.45	.66
Total: Trust Dimension	77	4.56	.46
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	77	4.22	.70
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	77	4.62	.49
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	77	3.42	1.19
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	77	4.25	.75
Total: Communication Dimension	77	4.17	.52
The members of my team are good at what they do.	77	4.55	.53
I can do a good job working with this team.	76	4.54	.58
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	77	4.16	.69
We are a well-performing team.	77	4.42	.62
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	77	4.41	.52
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	77	4.10	.82
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	77	4.53	.58
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	77	4.21	.82
I understand the roles of the other team members.	76	4.58	.52
Total: Coordination Dimension	77	4.35	.52
My team members and I get along well.	77	4.49	.62
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	77	4.14	.81
I like the members of my team.	77	4.62	.59
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	77	3.64	1.22
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	77	4.24	.64

Table 15. Court 1 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	4	4.50	.58
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	4	4.50	.58
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	4	4.75	.50
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	4	4.75	.50
Total: Trust Dimension	4	4.63	.48
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	4	4.50	.58
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	4	4.50	.58
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	4	3.75	.50
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	4	4.50	.58
Total: Communication Dimension	4	4.31	.52
The members of my team are good at what they do.	4	4.75	.50
I can do a good job working with this team.	4	4.75	.50
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	4	4.25	.96
We are a well-performing team.	4	4.25	.96
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	4	4.50	.68
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	4	4.50	.58
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	4	4.75	.50
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	4	4.75	.50
I understand the roles of the other team members.	4	4.75	.50
Total: Coordination Dimension	4	4.69	.47
My team members and I get along well.	4	5.00	.00
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	4	4.75	.50
I like the members of my team.	4	5.00	.00
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	4	4.50	.58
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	4	4.81	.24

Table 16: Court 2 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	8	4.62	.52
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	8	4.50	.54
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	8	4.62	.52
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	8	4.75	.46
Total: Trust Dimension	8	4.63	.46
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	8	4.50	.54
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	8	4.63	.52
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	8	3.88	.99
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	8	4.50	.54
Total: Communication Dimension	8	4.38	.50
The members of my team are good at what they do.	8	4.63	.52
I can do a good job working with this team.	8	4.25	.46
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	8	4.13	.64
We are a well-performing team.	8	4.38	.52
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	8	4.34	.46
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	8	4.00	.54
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	8	4.25	.71
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	8	4.25	.46
I understand the roles of the other team members.	8	4.50	.76
Total: Coordination Dimension	8	4.25	.53
My team members and I get along well.	8	4.62	.52
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	8	4.38	.52
I like the members of my team.	8	4.62	.52
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	8	4.50	.54
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	8	4.53	.36

Table 17. Court 3 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	11	4.73	.47
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	11	4.91	.30
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	11	4.82	.41
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	11	4.73	.47
Total: Trust Dimension	11	4.80	.33
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	11	4.64	.51
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	11	4.82	.41
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	11	4.00	1.10
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	11	4.73	.47
Total: Communication Dimension	11	4.55	.27
The members of my team are good at what they do.	11	4.82	.41
I can do a good job working with this team.	11	5.00	.00
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	11	4.27	.47
We are a well-performing team.	11	4.82	.41
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	11	4.73	.24
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	11	4.45	.82
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	11	4.91	.30
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	11	4.73	.47
I understand the roles of the other team members.	11	4.82	.41
Total: Coordination Dimension	11	4.73	.39
My team members and I get along well.	11	4.91	.30
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	11	4.73	.47
I like the members of my team.	11	5.00	.00
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	11	3.82	1.25
Total Conflict Resolution Dimension	11	4.61	.38

Table 18. Court 4 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	14	4.36	.50
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	14	4.71	.47
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	14	4.50	.65
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	14	4.14	.66
Total: Trust Dimension	14	4.43	.47
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	14	4.14	.66
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	14	4.36	.50
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	14	3.07	1.33
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	14	4.36	.63
Total: Communication Dimension	14	3.98	.43
The members of my team are good at what they do.	14	4.64	.50
I can do a good job working with this team.	14	4.50	.65
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	14	4.36	.75
We are a well-performing team.	14	4.50	.52
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	14	4.50	.54
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	14	4.00	.78
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	14	4.57	.51
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	14	4.14	.86
I understand the roles of the other team members.	14	4.57	.51
Total: Coordination Dimension	14	4.32	.50
My team members and I get along well.	14	4.43	.51
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	14	4.07	.92
I like the members of my team.	14	4.64	.50
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	14	3.50	1.16
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	14	4.16	.59

Table 19. Court 5 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	7	4.57	.54
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	7	4.29	.76
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	7	3.86	.90
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	7	3.71	.49
Total: Trust Dimension	7	4.14	.43
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	7	3.43	.79
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	7	4.71	.49
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	7	2.00	1.00
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	7	3.43	.98
Total: Communication Dimension	7	3.75	.66
The members of my team are good at what they do.	7	4.00	.58
I can do a good job working with this team. *	6	4.00	.63
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	7	3.57	.98
We are a well-performing team.	7	3.71	.49
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	7	3.80	.47
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	7	3.71	.95
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	7	4.29	.49
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	7	2.71	.95
I understand the roles of the other team members. *	6	4.50	.55
Total: Coordination Dimension	7	3.77	.40
My team members and I get along well.	7	3.57	.79
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	7	2.86	.69
I like the members of my team.	7	3.71	.76
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	7	1.71	.49
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	7	3.11	.59

* In Court 5, there were two specific questions with answers missing from two different respondents. When calculating dimension scores and overall scores, these cases were scored out of adjusted totals so that a missing case did not result in a score of zero.

Table 20. Court 6 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	10	4.50	.97
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	10	4.40	.52
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	10	4.20	.63
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	10	4.20	.92
Total: Trust Dimension	10	4.33	.64
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	10	3.70	.68
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	10	4.30	.48
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	10	3.50	.97
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	10	3.40	.70
Total: Communication Dimension	10	3.73	.45
The members of my team are good at what they do.	10	4.30	.48
I can do a good job working with this team.	10	4.20	.63
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	10	3.70	.68
We are a well-performing team.	10	4.10	.74
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	10	4.08	.51
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	10	3.60	.97
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	10	4.40	.52
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	10	4.10	.32
I understand the roles of the other team members.	10	4.40	.52
Total: Coordination Dimension	10	4.13	.44
My team members and I get along well.	10	4.10	.57
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	10	3.80	.63
I like the members of my team.	10	4.50	.71
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	10	3.20	1.23
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	10	3.90	.54

Table 21. Court 7 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	6	4.67	.52
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	6	4.83	.41
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	6	4.17	.75
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	6	4.50	.55
Total: Trust Dimension	6	4.54	.33
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	6	4.50	.55
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	6	5.00	.00
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	6	3.00	1.27
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	6	4.33	.52
Total: Communication Dimension	6	4.21	.49
The members of my team are good at what they do.	6	4.33	.52
I can do a good job working with this team.	6	4.67	.52
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	6	4.33	.52
We are a well-performing team.	6	4.33	.52
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	6	4.42	.47
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	6	4.17	1.17
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	6	4.17	.75
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	6	4.17	.75
I understand the roles of the other team members.	6	4.67	.52
Total: Coordination Dimension	6	4.29	.60
My team members and I get along well.	6	4.83	.41
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	6	3.67	.52
I like the members of my team.	6	4.67	.52
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	6	3.00	1.27
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	6	4.04	.53

Table 22. Court 8 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	10	4.90	.32
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	10	5.00	.00
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	10	4.70	.48
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	10	4.60	.52
Total: Trust Dimension	10	4.80	.23
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	10	4.20	.63
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	10	4.80	.42
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	10	3.80	1.03
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	10	4.40	.52
Total: Communication Dimension	10	4.30	.44
The members of my team are good at what they do.	10	4.60	.52
I can do a good job working with this team.	10	4.70	.48
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	10	4.30	.48
We are a well-performing team.	10	4.50	.53
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	10	4.53	.43
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	10	4.30	.68
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	10	4.60	.52
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	10	4.50	.53
I understand the roles of the other team members.	10	4.70	.48
Total: Coordination Dimension	10	4.53	.34
My team members and I get along well.	10	4.60	.52
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	10	4.50	.53
I like the members of my team.	10	4.60	.52
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	10	4.20	.79
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	10	4.48	.45

Table 23. Court 9 Descriptive Statistics for Mental Health Court Survey Items

Survey Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I can express myself accurately when interacting with team members.	7	4.86	.38
I support the other members of my team when they need help or guidance.	7	4.71	.49
I feel supported by my team members when I need help or guidance.	7	4.71	.49
I believe my team members are open and honest in their discussions with me.	7	5.00	.00
Total: Trust Dimension	7	4.82	.31
I receive the feedback I need from my team members that is necessary for me to do my job.	7	4.57	.54
My teammates and I exchange information on a regular basis.	7	4.71	.49
Some members of my team are not very good at communicating.	7	3.57	1.13
If something goes wrong, my team often discusses ways in which we can prevent it from happening again.	7	4.57	.54
Total: Communication Dimension	7	4.50	.32
The members of my team are good at what they do.	7	4.71	.49
I can do a good job working with this team.	7	4.71	.49
My team accomplishes the goals we set for it.	7	4.43	.54
We are a well-performing team.	7	4.86	.38
Total: Team Efficacy Dimension	7	4.68	.40
I believe that my team members know what I am supposed to be doing.	7	4.43	.54
When I need information, I know who to get it from on my team.	7	4.71	.76
The behaviors of my team members mesh nicely when we are working together.	7	4.43	.79
I understand the roles of the other team members.	7	4.29	.49
Total: Coordination Dimension	7	4.46	.53
My team members and I get along well.	7	4.57	.54
When disagreements arise, my team members and I settle them fairly and amicably.	7	4.43	.54
I like the members of my team.	7	4.86	.38
Some members of my team hold grudges against other members.	7	4.43	.54
Total: Conflict Resolution Dimension	7	4.57	.35

Table 24. Statewide Mental Health Court Survey Team Participant Roles (N=77)

Justice Sector Respondents	N
Judge	6
Coordinator/Program Manager	6
Public Defender	6
Assistant Public Defender	3
Assistant Director of Probation	2
Supervisor of Probation	2
Chief Probation Officer	1
Probation Officer	11
Court Services Representative	1
State's Attorney	1
Assistant State's Attorney	5
Court Administrator	1
Total: Justice Partner Representatives	45
Direct Service Respondents	N
Case Management Supervisor	1
Case Manager	5
Mental Health Case Manager/Assessor	1
Mental Health Professional	1
Clinician	3
Clinical Social Worker/Referral Source	1
Psychologist	1
Trauma Therapist	1
Clinical Director/Supervisor	2
Ancillary Mental Health Services Provider	1
Jail Director of Mental Health	1
Dual Disorders Specialist	1
Provider Agency Representative	4
Community Support Specialist	1
TIP Assessor/Team Leader	1
Registered Nurse	2
Total: Direct Services Respondents	27

Other Respondents	N
Referral Source	1
Evaluator	2
Pretrial Representative	1
Support Staff	1
Total: Other Respondents	5

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VITA

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Ms. Raman has served as Research Assistant for the Forgiveness Laboratory at Loyola University Chicago on a study designed to measure the ability to forgive and the extent to which forgiveness is influenced by such conditions as differing levels of arousal and severity of offense, the presence or absence of apologies, and mitigating circumstances, under the direction of Dr. Jeanne Zechmeister. She has most recently served as a Co-Project Manager for a statewide study in Illinois of Mental Health Court operations, led by Dr. Arthur Lurigio of Loyola University Chicago, responsible for offsite data collection, collection and analyses of program data, and generation and distribution of research project reports.