Bridging Research and Practice

A Handbook for Implementing Research-Informed Practices in Juvenile Probation

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About the Bridge Project

This handbook was developed as part of the Bridging Research and Practice Project to Advance Juvenile Justice and Safety (Bridge Project), a cooperative agreement funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and managed by the National Institute of Justice that launched in 2015. The goal of the Bridge Project is to facilitate the translation of juvenile justice research into actionable policy and practice changes. Although we have learned a great deal about adolescent development and effective approaches to working with youth, there is very little practical guidance on how juvenile justice practitioners can integrate this information into their daily practices.[1] The Bridge Project aims to fill that gap, translating key research findings into concrete recommendations for juvenile probation practitioners. Other resources from the Bridge Project are available on the project website: https://urbn.is/bridge.

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Contents

1. About This Guide. 2

2. Assessing Organizational Readiness and Laying the Groundwork for Change 8

3. Establishing Systems for Continuous Quality Improvement and Sustaining the Change 15

4. Leading a Change Initiative 18

5. Defining a Clear Mission. 23

6. Coordinating with External Partners 27

7. Aligning and Building Staff Competencies 34

8. Aligning Policies and Practices 51

9. Aligning Data Systems 63

10. Implementing Research in Practice: A Call to Action. 69

Appendix A: Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Executive Summary. 72

Appendix B: Service Referral Matrix Examples 75

Endnotes. 80

About This Guide

At the end of each chapter in this handbook, you will find three boxes highlighting continuous quality improvement tips, partner engagement tips, and questions for consideration related to the content of the chapter.

Continuous Quality Improvement Tips

Partner Engagement Tips

Questions for Consideration

Throughout this handbook you will see information boxes, example boxes, and tool boxes. Example boxes are meant to be illustrative of real world applications of the research, however, this does not suggest that the featured jurisdictions engage in best practices in all their activities or that these are the only jurisdictions applying research-informed practices. Tool boxes highlight resources we found in our literature search process that align with the research discussed in the handbook; they do not represent an exhaustive list of all existing resources.

Information Boxes pull out key takeaways from the previous text, highlight relevant context, and pull in selected information from other publications associated with this project.

Example Boxes highlight how probation agencies around the country have applied these concepts in practice.

Tool Boxes highlight existing resources that would support agencies in assessing or implementing the items discussed.

Link

Internal Links styled in bold blue font will jump to relevant content in the document.

Over the past several decades, we have learned a great deal about adolescent development and what works to improve outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice system.[2] We have also learned much about how to successfully implement justice programs.[3] This handbook pulls together the best thinking from both of those areas and outlines strategies for successfully implementing research-informed practices in one specific context: juvenile probation.

Who Is the Target Audience?

This handbook is informed by and designed for juvenile probation practitioners at the state and local levels (particularly agency leaders and supervisors) who want to align policy and practice with research and promote better outcomes for their agencies and youth. We hope it is also helpful for stakeholders outside the probation field working to align juvenile justice practices with research on adolescent development and on what improves outcomes for youth.

It is important to note that although agency leaders are the primary focus for this resource, frontline staff are equally critical to success. An earlier report—*Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*—synthesized the literature on practices that improve outcomes for youth and translated those findings into concrete recommendations for probation officers working directly with youth. In fact, a defining feature of a research-informed approach to probation is that it empowers officers to act as an intervention in and of themselves, using each interaction as an opportunity for working toward long-term growth. We noted then that though juvenile probation officers have the power to change their own interactions with youth, they operate in an environment of policies, procedures, rules, and expectations. Individually, they cannot effect all the types of changes a research-informed approach entails. They need the active support of their department, agency, or office to integrate research-informed practices into juvenile probation operations and systems. This handbook provides a framework for leaders to embrace the research-informed approach and promote successful implementation of a new way of doing business—including anticipating likely speedbumps and using problem-solving to avoid them—and outlines supervisors' and external partners' roles in supporting success for justice-involved youth.

How Was This Handbook Developed?

We used a systematic, research-informed approach* to gather the best evidence in juvenile probation about what promotes long-term behavioral change **and** the best evidence from implementation research regarding how to manage a change process in justice agencies. To frame the information in this handbook, we used implementation science** to guide our search for research documenting implementation and change-management strategies and challenges. Thus, this handbook supports your innovations by drawing more fully on the research described in the following two other resources:

* Research informed vs. evidence based: Both of these approaches are systematic and ground the information in the best research available. The difference is that evidence-based research sets a particular standard for what the best research is, usually requiring that multiple studies show the same results and that the strength of the results be tested using some kind of experimental design. Research informed still looks at the quality of the research, but it casts a wider net. See Harvell et al. 2018 and Derrick-Mills et al. 2019 for a detailed discussion.

** Implementation science is "the study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice" (NIRN 2015). One of the leading organizations in this field is the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). You can learn more about implementation science on their website at https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/national-implementation-research-network.

- *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*,[4] featuring the core practices of:
  - screening, assessment, and structured decisionmaking;
  - case planning;
  - matching services and promoting positive youth development (PYD);
  - structuring supervision to promote long-term behavior change; and
  - incentivizing success and implementing graduated responses.

- *Bridging Research and Practice: Synthesizing the Literature on Implementing Change in Justice Agencies*,[5] drawing from more than 100 sources to highlight the important elements in implementing and supporting change.

What Is a Research-Informed Approach to Juvenile Probation?

For this project, we looked at the research on adolescent development and what works to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. We identified five core probation practices:[***] **(1) assessment and structured decisionmaking; (2) case planning; (3) matching youth to services and promoting positive youth development; (4) promoting long-term behavior change; and (5) incentivizing success and implementing graduated responses.** For more detail on the approach, see our earlier report, *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*. That link also includes one-pager summaries of each of the five practices, which are also summarized in a two-page overview in **appendix A** of this handbook.

In short, the approach provides a new way to think about juvenile probation. It is not a single program or even a set of programs. It is a lens through which juvenile probation practitioners can examine current practices and implement changes–some big, some small–to recognize adolescents' unique needs and strengths and help them develop new skills and make better decisions in the future. It also provides an alternate framework for accountability with a focus on taking responsibility for one's behavior, understanding how one's actions impact others, and making better choices. Better choices mean safer communities.

Why Implement a Research-Informed Approach?

Implementing a research-informed approach can have a significant payoff. Aligning juvenile probation policies and practices with research could increase success rates and public safety, promote more efficient use of resources, and improve outcomes for the hundreds of thousands of youth on probation supervision each year. This handbook outlines considerations and concrete strategies for adopting a new approach to supervision, grounded in the best information available about effective programs and practices as well as successful implementation.

What Will I Learn in This Handbook?

The handbook offers strategies to address key implementation tasks that help probation agencies prepare to transition to or more fully implement a research-informed approach, integrate that approach throughout their systems and culture, and sustain the change for the longterm. The handbook uses key processes identified in implementation science to organize the materials into the following main sections:

Assessing Organizational Readiness and Laying the Groundwork for Change

Establishing a System for Continuous Quality Improvement and Sustaining the Change

Leading a Change Initiative

Defining a Clear Mission

Coordinating with External Partners

Aligning and Building Staff Competencies

Aligning Policies and Procedures

Aligning Data Systems

In each section, you will find the following information:

- what the research says about the topic and strategies for using it in your work
- tips on engaging in continuous quality improvement (CQI)
- tips on establishing effective partnerships
- questions to help you bring what you have learned to your team and work with them to implement it

[***] For a detailed explanation of each practice, see Harvell et al. 2018.; For more on the research review and translation process that resulted in these core practices, see S. Harvell, H. Love, and J. Tyson, "Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change Research and Practice Synthesis and Translation Process," (Washington, DC: NCJRS, 2018).

Visualizing How It All Fits Together

As leaders, administrators, and frontline staff know, there are many steps between deciding to adopt a new approach, adopting that approach, adjusting and aligning systems to support it, refining it based on challenges experienced, and sustaining it. This handbook is designed with this integrated, continuous approach in mind. It is intended to help agencies after they have decided to use a research-informed approach, and is designed to help them anticipate, navigate, and strategize their way to positive outcomes for their agency, community, and the youth and families interacting with their systems and staff. Recognizing the continuous nature of the process, the handbook provides tips for assessing readiness and highlights how to integrate continuous quality improvement throughout.

Sometimes it is helpful to visualize all the pieces and how they relate to each other before exploring each one. Figure 1 is designed to help readers visualize the relationships between probation officers' frontline practices (located in the middle of the framework under "Change in Organizational Culture and Frontline Practices"), the implementation activities needed to support those practices ("Administrative Activities to Support and Improve Quality and Sustain Change"), and the outcomes for probation agencies, communities, families, and youth. Testing of evidence-based practices and strategies tends to focus primarily on the direct "intervention" (represented here as the frontline practices) and its relationship to the outcomes. Typically, the research gives tangential attention to the practices and processes highlighted by implementation science: staff competencies, organizational structures and processes, leadership strategies, and how they all work together in a framework of continuous quality improvement spanning multiple years. The contents of the "Staff Competencies," "Organizational Structures and Processes," and "Leadership Strategies" boxes in figure 1 highlight our findings from the literature.[6] The quality-improvement cycle illustrates the continuous nature of the relationship between the frontline practices and administrative practices, and emphasizes that implementation is an ongoing process.

As figure 1 shows, effectively implementing these practices and focusing on integrating and supporting them can improve outcomes for probation agencies, communities, families, and youth. Change takes time and improvements in these outcomes take time too. Many of the improved outcomes are longer-term, and some of them likely cannot be measured by the juvenile probation agencies, nor would they appear during the time that youth are engaged in the juvenile justice system. Agencies will want to measure more immediate outcomes or indicators (like those shown in the "Agency Outcomes" box) and indicators that youth are moving toward longer-term behavior change (for more about suggested data collection and performance metrics, see the Continuous Quality Improvement and Aligning Data Systems sections of this handbook). Nonetheless, it is helpful to keep these potential outcomes in mind as agencies work to change practices that support long-term behavior change.

Finally, figure 1 highlights processes within an agency that implementation science has shown are important for integrating change of any kind into an agency. The boxes and arrows make it look like an agency would start at the top and progress uninterrupted to the bottom. ***Leaders and staff in any agency know that the real world is not that simple. Agencies do not have the luxury of deciding all the changes they are going to make or how many changes they will be working on simultaneously.*** Managing multiple changes concurrently is more complex than making a single change. The "Administrative Activities to Support and Improve Quality and Sustain Change" component of figure 1 applies regardless of how many changes your agency is making. Multiple changes mean it is even more likely that policies will become misaligned, that data systems will not fully support the work, or that staff will not fully understand how to do all the things they have been asked to do. In other words, it is even more important to focus on staff competencies, organizational structures and processes, and leadership support for the changes their agencies are making.

One of the inputs in figure 1 is research that helps us understand how youth are different from adults and why that matters in juvenile probation. It is helpful to reflect for a moment on that research. More information for understanding these differences and why they matter can be found in previous resources developed through this project.

FIGURE 1

VISUALIZING THE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING LONG-TERM BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN YOUTH

An Agency Perspective on Implementing a Research-Informed Approach to Juvenile Probation

Contextual Factors

- System Organization
- External Stakeholders
- Judicial Dynamics
- Community Engagement
- Community Resources

Inputs

- Research on adolescent development
- Training and technical assistance materials
- Youth
- Supportive adults
- Caregivers
- Probation agency staff and resources

Continuous Quality Improvement

Administrative Activities to Support and Improve Quality and Sustain Change

Staff Competencies

- Identify needed knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors
- Communicate and assess competencies
- Support attainment of new competencies
- Recognize that learning new competencies takes time and active engagement (training alone is not enough)
- Revise job descriptions and align performance expectations

Organizational Structures and Processes

- Create multiple avenues supporting communication
- Engage staff from all levels
- Develop decision-support systems that facilitate data tracking and feedback loops
- Engage external stakeholders early and often
- Align policies and procedures with the new approach

Leadership Strategies

- Demonstrate commitment to the change
- Anticipate the time needed to make the changes
- Allocate resources to support the change
- Foster and generate staff enthusiasm
- Recognize the importance of supervisors as leaders
- Promote the change throughout the community

Continuous Quality Improvement

Change in Organizational Culture and Frontline Practices

- Assessment and structured decisionmaking
- Case planning
- Matching services and promoting positive youth development
- Promoting long-term behavior change
- Incentivizing success and implementing graduated responses

Continuous Quality Improvement

Outcomes

Probation Agency Outcomes

- Meaningful interactions with youth
- Reduced recidivism
- More efficient resource use

Community Outcomes

- Improved public safety
- More youth engaged in prosocial activities
- Stronger workforce

Family Outcomes

- Increased family engagement
- Improved communication, cohesion, and family functioning

Youth Outcomes

- More/healthier relationships with adults
- Improvements in critical life skills
- Increased engagement in prosocial activities
- Better critical thinking and impulse control
- Improved academic engagement and achievement
- Improved job readiness and employment
- Improved perceptions of legal authorities and legitimacy of law

Continuous Quality Improvement

HOW ARE YOUTH DIFFERENT FROM ADULTS AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TO PROBATION?

Youth differ from adults in many ways that are relevant for juvenile justice interventions. Youth typically have less capacity for self-regulation than adults and can have a hard time managing their emotions and behavior, especially when they are nervous, excited, or stressed.[7] Youth are typically more likely to take risks that will result in immediate rewards, are more susceptible to peer pressure, and have a harder time considering the long-term consequences of their actions.[8] In short, youth are predisposed to experiment with risky behavior and lack mature capacities for self-regulation and judgment.

Research shows that the majority of youth age out of this experimentation phase, and that most youth who become involved in the juvenile justice system do not continue offending into adulthood. Social contexts including families, school and work opportunities, and prosocial peer groups provide critical supports to promote healthy development. Fair and just treatment—and the perception of fair and just treatment—are also critical to youths' moral development and legal socialization—that is, to the processes through which youth develop a sense of self, gain an understanding of their place in the community, and adopt societal norms about prosocial behavior.[9] Justice-system responses that acknowledge these differences, respect the critical importance of social contexts in the lives of youth, and promote positive youth development are often better able to get youth on track to successful adulthood.[*]

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* See page 2 of S. Harvell et al., *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-term Change* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, 2018)."

2

Assessing Organizational Readiness and Laying the Groundwork for Change

Change is hard. Sometimes the most difficult thing about it is changing aspects that are hard to see. Recognizing that each organization has a particular culture—"the way things work around here"—and addressing that culture head-on is crucial for making successful changes.

Research suggests that organizational norms and values (and staff perceptions of those norms and values) impact whether organizations successfully change the way they operate. Depending on a probation agency's current culture, implementing a research-informed approach focused on long-term behavior change and built on collaborative relationships might be a significant shift in approach.[10] Resistance to changing practices can derail implementation, meaning agencies should take particular care in assessing their organizational culture and addressing any concerns *before* beginning a change effort.[11] Moreover, an organizational culture that is open to change can help the agency overcome otherwise inhibiting implementation barriers.

Features of open and supportive agency cultures include the following:

- **organizational commitment**[12] **demonstrated through leadership actions**
- **readiness for change**[13] considers the current context of the organization or agency, including other change efforts already underway, staff morale and interest in learning, and agency to support a system of changemaking as described throughout this handbook (see the **toolbox** below for assessing readiness)
- **staff support**[14] to gain the new knowledge, skills, and abilities to **make the change**
- **inclusivity**,[15] **shared decisionmaking**,[16] **equity**, and **respect**[17] are all characteristics of leadership willing to engage with staff in making the change happen (these qualities reflect a sense that "we are in this together and will support each other through the process")

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Several tools exist for assessing organizational readiness for change. Casey Family Programs published a helpful overview of existing tools to support their partners in the child welfare field, many of which are useful in juvenile probation settings. These include the following:

- "Organizational Readiness for Change – Social Agency Staff Version"
- California state government's "Organizational Change Management Readiness Guide"
- "Checklist to Assess Organizational Readiness (CARI) for EIP Implementation"

So, how do you help your agency and staff move toward a culture that will embrace and support this kind of change? The research suggests a four-pronged approach:

- **Demonstrate commitment from the highest levels of the organization.**[18] Tangible actions from leadership demonstrate commitment to the initiative more effectively than verbal support,[19] although verbal support is also a key component.
  - Explain to staff how the change will help them be successful.[20] Fear that change will replace their expertise or that it will not really help can be a significant barrier.[21]
  - Ensure staff have what they need to implement the new changes. For example, are their current caseloads compatible with the new expectations?[22] Have sufficient time and resources been set aside to help staff learn the new skills they need to make the change?[23]

- **Identify and acknowledge the organization's current culture.**
  - Conduct a culture assessment to better understand the organization's current culture.[24] Ensure each level of the organization provides input.
  - Openly acknowledge the organization's history of change, including addressing any problematic past implementation efforts and demonstrating how this effort will be different.[25]

- **Actively engage staff at all levels in making decisions about the changes.**
  - Actively solicit feedback from all levels of staff and incorporate it into change efforts[26] and communicate back to staff how their input is being used.[27] Some mechanisms for collecting feedback include periodic interviews with staff,[28] 360-degree reviews,[29] conducting exit interviews with staff members who resign,[30] and soliciting feedback from groups identified as particularly resistant.[31]
  - Enlist staff who are committed to seeing the change happen and can serve as a problem-solving resource for others within the organization at multiple levels. Such staff are sometimes called "champions for change."[32]
  - Involve staff directly in the revisions and rewriting of policies. Consider creating a committee with representation from each staff level charged with revising policies to align with new values.[33]
  - Share data demonstrating successes with staff.[34]

- **Listen and respond to staff concerns about the new changes.**
  - Provide avenues for staff to express concerns.[35]
  - Look for signs of resistance and respond quickly.[36] Signs can include not taking paperwork seriously or forgetting aspects of the new program.[37]
  - Improve internal perceptions of equality and fairness. Avoid preferential treatment of any specific group of staff.[38]

What does "ready enough" look like?

Implementation science helps us understand that there are four natural stages in any change (implementation) process. Most people are used to thinking about implementation as the finished state where the change has already happened and staff routinely engage in intended practices. However, there are two stages of change that occur before that steady state and another that occurs after.

The Active Implementation Framework developed by Fixsen and colleagues (2015) identifies four stages of implementation that support successful change efforts. The authors term these stages exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation. They also suggest that the full process typically takes two to four years to complete. Throughout this handbook we adjust the language slightly and refer to the stages as exploration, preparation, implementation, and sustaining the change.

EXPLORATION STAGE. In the exploration stage, the agency or department is doing the following:

- assessing their mission and priorities
- determining their strengths and challenges in carrying out that mission
- seeking evidence on what kinds of strategies, approaches, and practices could help them better reach the outcomes they want to achieve
- investigating the appropriateness of those options for the populations they serve
- considering the feasibility of adopting the new practices given the particular context in which they serve their clients
- reflecting on the resources that will be needed to make the change

READINESS FOR EXPLORATION STAGE

The agency considers possible changes, has the autonomy to investigate options, and has the initiative to investigate possibilities.

How this handbook can help:

- The information in this handbook can help agencies better anticipate the full scope of a needed change; successful change goes well beyond purchasing a new data system or providing a single training session.
- It can help your agency consider changes it will need to make to address staff competencies; align policies, procedures, and data systems; and shift organizational culture and practices.
- It can also help you identify important external partners to invite early in the process and determine how to engage them to set a foundation for change.
- Finally, it can help you determine how much effort and resources will it take for leadership to demonstrate sufficient commitment to the effort.

Mandated changes. *Sometimes agencies are mandated to make a change through the legislative, judicial, or executive processes in their state or locality. In that case, individual agencies may not have the opportunity to engage in this stage of the implementation process.*

FIGURE 2

THE FOUR STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Stages

Exploration ↔	Installation* ↔	Initial Implementation** ↔	Full Implementation
▪ Assess needs ▪ Examine intervention components ▪ Consider implementation drivers ▪ Assess fit	▪ Acquire resources ▪ Prepare organization ▪ Prepare implementation drivers ▪ Prepare staff	▪ Adjust implementation drivers ▪ Manage change ▪ Deploy data systems ▪ Initiate improvement cycles	▪ Monitor and manage implementation drivers ▪ Achieve fidelity and outcome benchmarks ▪ Further improve fidelity and outcomes

2–4 YEARS

* In the Handbook, we refer to this as Preparation. **In the Handbook, we refer to this as Sustaining the Change.

Source: "Overview of the Stages of Implementation," National Implementation Research Network, accessed September 12, 2019, https://sisep.fpg.unc.edu/guidebook/level-one/stages-implementation.

PREPARATION STAGE. In the preparation stage, the agency or department has determined the type of change it wants to make and is preparing to make that change by reflecting on the information in this handbook to specifically identify the following **administrative activities** to support changes in practice:

- **Staff competencies**
  - identifying the staff competencies that will be needed
  - assessing competencies of current staff to determine what supports staff will need to make the change
  - determining the possible options for providing professional development and the costs of those options
- **Organizational structures and processes**
  - examining policies, procedures, and data systems to determine where changes will be needed to align old and new ways of doing things
  - estimating the options, timelines, and costs for making the changes
  - involving external partners in determining how and where policies and procedures outside of the agency (but integral to the changes) will need to be made, and the procedures and timelines for doing so
- **Leadership strategies**
  - identifying all types of leaders within the agency and involving them in this stage, especially if they were not involved earlier
  - determining together how the leaders will convey the importance of the change and their commitment to it
  - strategizing and anticipating potential challenges and identifying a system for work-arounds
  - examining options for using communication channels and feedback loops to fully engage staff in the process, monitor change, and track success
  - identifying the supports leaders at various levels will need to be successful change-managers

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE. In the implementation stage, the agency or department begins to make the changes to **administrative activity** identified in the preparation stage:

- **Staff competencies**
  - starting up new professional development strategies (e.g., training and coaching) to support the change
  - aligning job descriptions and performance expectations for staff

READINESS FOR PREPARATION STAGE

The agency has decided on (or has been mandated to adopt) a particular change in practice or approach.

How this handbook can help:

- This handbook points to specific areas where planning is critical and where involving stakeholders early can make a real difference; the types of changes to policy, procedure, and organizational systems that will be needed; and strategies for leadership to support success.
- For those interested in implementing a research-informed approach to juvenile probation, this handbook integrates specific information about aligned practices and begins forming a bridge for agencies to structure their planning.

READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

It is possible that an agency will never feel “ready” to actually implement the change. The purpose of the exploration and preparation stages is to ensure the changes that will be made align with the outcomes the agency hopes to achieve, draws on the best evidence for the approach they need, and helps them anticipate what “implementation” really means (more than a single training on a new practice).

How this handbook can help:

- All of the elements in this handbook are designed to attune leaders to the strategies needed to support successful implementation.
- Adopting a continuous quality-improvement approach is important at this stage. The handbook provides tips for imbedding continuous quality-improvement in structures and processes throughout the agency.

- **Organizational structures and processes**
  - enacting and operationalizing the alignment changes identified in the preparation stage
  - piloting changes when possible to test for possible unintended consequences
  - regularly meeting with external partners to discuss how the changes are going, and continue building momentum around the change
  - adjusting caseloads if needed to support the change

- **Leadership strategies**
  - tracking accomplishments and assessing challenges
  - listening to staff concerns
  - celebrating milestones or successes
  - actively engaging to demonstrate ongoing commitment to the change
  - securing resources to support the change

SUSTAINING THE CHANGE. In this stage, the "change" has become part of the routine practice of doing the work, but the work of the agency in ensuring that the practices continue to be carried out as intended is not done. Sustaining the quality of the initial change effort can be difficult, as agencies and staff face the challenge of responding to new research and new priorities.

- **Staff competencies**
  - ensure staff receive ongoing professional development and feedback so they can continue honing their skills
  - ensure new staff receive systematic training and support to adopt the practices
  - as the agency responds to changing priorities, help staff understand how to use their skills in the new environment

- **Organizational structures and processes**
  - continue reviewing policies, procedures, and data systems
  - make changes based on staff feedback and challenges faced in routine implementation
  - consider how changes in community or political priorities may cause misalignments and create a routine process for checking for and making these changes
  - continue meeting with external stakeholders and share results with them so they can see the value of the change and can alert your agency to changes they are making

- **Leadership strategies**
  - sustain the commitment—staff need to hear that maintaining the change is important and that leadership is still paying attention
  - adopt a continuous quality-improvement approach that keeps all agency leaders focused on routinely observing, reflecting on, and solving problems

The reality is that juvenile probation agencies are operating in changing communities, are dealing with changing political priorities at all levels of government, and work in a field where new research continues to emerge on how to refine practices to better serve youth, families, and communities. This handbook helps agencies focus on key elements and processes that are important at all stages of implementation, institutionalize an approach to considering and observing changes, and establish routine mechanisms for continuously improving changes and aligning them with agency goals.

READINESS FOR SUSTAINING THE CHANGE

Recognize that sustaining the change does not simply happen. It requires time, energy, active engagement, and continuing benchmarks.

How this handbook can help:

- All of the elements needed to support successful implementation are also needed to sustain it. The handbook serves as a constant reminder to do the following:
  - establish a continuous quality-improvement approach
  - consistently engage with external partners
  - consistently support staff in attaining competencies

- Continue to reflect on how other internal and external changes may result in misalignment of policies, procedures, and data systems.

Continuous Quality Improvement Starts Now to Help You Progress Faster

1. Get a clear picture of your organizational baseline. What are people concerned about at the start of the process? How many and what kinds of people or position types are expressing concern?

2. Reflect on the changing nature of the conversations. Are concerns among certain staff decreasing? If not, reflect on what has not been addressed and how you could address it. If so, you are readier for implementing the change.

3. Decide what "ready enough" looks like at the beginning of the process. All organizations will experience some resistance, and you will need to support staff throughout the change. It is important to understand the types of supports that will be needed. Plan for how you will continue to actively involve staff and obtain feedback throughout the implementation of the change.

Partnering with Staff is Key to Supporting and Sustaining Change

1. Buy-in from staff can be an insurmountable hurdle or a major asset. If you think of your staff as a hurdle, they will be one. If you think of your staff as your partner, you can create a force for change together.

2. Even good change is difficult and demands extra energy and time from everyone. Recognizing this fact and figuring out ways to help staff cope with them are important to success.

3. Early involvement shows staff you respect them and consider them a partner. It demonstrates that you value their expertise, and that you recognize successful change will require multiple kinds of expertise to troubleshoot.

4. In the case of research-informed practices, it is particularly important to show staff that their own expertise is not being replaced by the research but rather that the research helps them frame and better use what they have learned.

Questions to Consider: Assessing Readiness and Laying the Groundwork for Change

How would you describe your current culture?

- Do agency leaders and supervisors support a new way of doing business?
- Are staff likely to embrace a research-informed approach?
- Do you have a history of shared decisionmaking and inclusivity?
- Would staff describe your agency as one that promotes equity and respect?

Do you anticipate barriers to change? If so, which concern you most and how might you overcome them?

How will you demonstrate your commitment to change?

How will you ensure staff have the necessary resources to implement a new approach?

How will you promote buy-in amongst supervisors? Line staff? Others?

3 Establishing Systems for Continuous Quality Improvement and Sustaining the Change

It may seem odd to put this section at the beginning of this handbook, but the location is strategic: it is important to be thinking about the end at the beginning. Continuously improving and sustaining a change is much easier when the elements of and processes supporting continuous improvement are built into the system from the beginning.

Making change takes time. You can improve implementation by planning ahead and anticipating likely speed bumps, but it is nearly impossible to anticipate every possible scenario, especially when the environment you are working in—for example, your community, government infrastructure, or the justice system more broadly—is experiencing changes in political priorities, budget allocations, or staff turnover. It is better to go into the change process prepared for something not to work out quite right, and with a plan for fixing it.

Continuous quality improvement, performance measurement and management, and data-informed decisionmaking are all organizational processes and functions that use data gathered through various sources (including direct observation) to improve program performance and assess implementation quality.[39] The continuous quality-improvement terminology is grounded in the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle developed in the private sector to quickly test innovation. When implemented in the public sector, the cycle tends to take on the characteristics of performance measurement and management, selecting indicators or benchmarks of success to measure itself against and making improvements if those benchmarks are not met.[40] Many studies have documented agencies' use of these techniques to assess compliance rather than assure learning, and although assessing compliance and assuring organizational learning and improvement are not the same, some processes are used to accomplish both purposes.[41]

As adopted in the field of implementation science, continuous quality improvement places a strong emphasis on implementation quality and on assessing an agency's fidelity to the evidence-based practices it has adopted.[42] At the same time, the implementation-science approach integrates this continuous quality-improvement process throughout the drivers and stages of implementation. Thus, implementation science focuses on the importance of a continuous quality-improvement approach that regularly assesses progress, reflects on challenges and successes, assesses implementation quality, and adjusts decisions, processes, policies, and procedures to support an implementation process that can be sustained and improved.

The continuous quality-improvement process recognizes that organizations and programs are part of dynamic systems. If you recognize that a continuous flow of information about how implementation is occurring is important, then you can intentionally set up avenues of communication and data that allow you to learn about what is going well and not so well in your implementation efforts. As shown in figure 1, there is a continuous interplay between administrative practices and frontline practices and culture change. All administrative practices proactively set the stage for successful implementation, but they also need to react and be flexible to accommodate adjustments to expectations or policies and procedures and to provide additional supports for staff. Continuous quality improvement is not something that happens in addition to your everyday work, but rather is most effective when it is integrated into it. With that in mind, we have provided tips for continuous quality improvement at the end of the chapters that follow.

Look for this symbol and a text box like this at the end of the chapters that follow for tips on how to integrate continuous quality-improvement strategies throughout all organizational systems and strategies. It is this integration that will enable your organization to sustain the change.

IMPLEMENTATION IN ACTION IN JEFFERSON PARISH, LOUISIANA

In 2009, the Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services undertook a comprehensive review of its probation practices with support from the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps and set about implementing dozens of evidence-based recommendations to improve outcomes. As part of this process, Jefferson Parish improved screening and investment practices, standardized the pre-disposition investigation process, focused resources on youth most at risk of future offending, enhanced probation-officer training and skill development, and invested in evidence-based treatment practices, among other changes.[43] The continuous quality review and improvement system they implemented promoted ongoing improvements, and outcomes have been impressive. Following these changes, Jefferson Parish saw a decrease in the number of youths entering the system, in revocations, and in recidivism rates. Better outcomes improved judicial confidence and boosted morale in the department, and probation officers' expanded skills and responsibilities led to a 14-percent increase in what had been historically low salaries.[44]

To read more about Jefferson Parish's experience, see *Probation Review Implementation: How Best Practices Meet Everyday Practices*. It is a great case study of one juvenile probation department's thoughtful, strategic implementation of research-informed practices.

4

Leading a Change Initiative

Leaders set the tone for everything within an organization, including a change effort. Strong and supportive leadership is critical for making successful changes—large and small—to the way things are done.

Research shows that strong leaders are important for initiating[45] and sustaining change.[46] Communicating a clear vision and demonstrating commitment to change can generate staff enthusiasm[47] and secure staff buy-in. Leaders also play an important role in anticipating and addressing challenges,[48] outlining goals and timelines,[49] and engaging with external stakeholders.[50] Lastly, agency leaders allocate resources to the change process,[51] including staff time;[52] how and where money is invested can send powerful messages about the change effort.

It is not only leaders' actions but their qualities that promote successful implementation. Research suggests that effective change-management leaders are the following:

- **skilled communicators**[53]
- **visionary**[54]
- **creative and innovative**[55]
- **well-liked by staff at all levels of the organization5**[6]
- **receptive to new ideas**[57]
- **motivating**[58]
- **skilled at developing positive internal and external relations**[59]
- **committed to the change**[60]

A key first step for leaders contemplating a change effort is to recognize that change requires both time and resources. For some agencies, embracing a research-informed approach to juvenile probation will require building critical infrastructure,[62] altering work routines,[63] and training staff.[64] Developing a plan and articulating clear, measurable objectives and timelines for achieving them can provide a helpful framework and establish transparency around a change effort.[65]

In addition to these things, leaders would be well-advised to consider the following questions:

HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP A COHERENT VISION THAT LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS EMBRACE?

The literature suggests that it is important to ensure leaders throughout the organization agree on the values, goals, and vision for the change effort[66] and are communicating the same messages to staff throughout the organization.[67] This includes mid-level leadership and supervisors.[68]

To that end, it can be helpful to ensure leaders fully understand the change, its purpose, and its benefits before initiating a change effort.[69] It can also be helpful to identify an internal project director or program champion and ensure staff are clear about who that person is.[70] Alternatively, having a group of dedicated leaders—particularly one that spans multiple levels[71]—can be effective,[72] as long as it is clear who the leaders are and there are not too many.[73]

HOW WILL YOU DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO THE CHANGE EFFORT?

Demonstrating that you are committed to change—particularly through actions rather than words—is important to success,[74] as is sustaining that commitment.[75] The literature suggests a range of strategies for consistently demonstrating commitment, including the following:

- Make sure to deliver on promises for resources.[76]
- Clearly and consistently communicate rationale, purpose, vision, and progress.[77] In other words, make sure the change effort is part of ongoing business conversations and provides opportunities for leadership to voice their support.[78]
- Actively investigate what strategies are succeeding and what could be improved.[79] Pay specific attention to staff training and resources, and adjust as needed.[80]
- As staff grow accustomed to new practices, respond to mistakes with collaborative problem-solving rather than disciplinary action.[81]

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "LEADERSHIP"?

We reference leadership throughout this handbook, and "leadership" can pertain to staff at multiple levels of an organization. In some localities, probation is a local service, whereas in others, it is administered at the state level; in still others there are both local and state oversight functions. Typically, when we reference leadership, we mean probation administrators, agency directors, and deputies. But changing the way organizations function requires leaders at multiple levels of the organization to strongly support the change effort.[61] Leaders at each level play a key role in the change effort. Those levels and roles can include the following:

- State probation administrators, agency directors, and deputies
  - Key tasks: define and communicate the vision; demonstrate consistent commitment to change; generate staff buy-in and enthusiasm; promote change throughout the broader system and community; develop system for continuous quality improvement.
- Supervisors and mid-level managers
  - Key tasks: promote staff buy-in; facilitate policy and practice changes; facilitate bidirectional communication between agency leaders and line staff; identify challenges and propose solutions to address them.
  - Research suggests that the important leadership roles that supervisors and mid-level managers can play are often overlooked (30 of the sources we reviewed mentioned important roles they play). As those who work closest with the frontline staff, they are the best positioned to regularly provide encouragement and support to the staff, and to observe challenges that need to be reported to upper-level management to be addressed at a systems level. Because they liaise between organizational leaders and frontline staff, they can serve either as a critical bridge that facilitates bidirectional communication or as a roadblock that inhibits it.
- Frontline staff
  - Key tasks: enact changes to policy and practice; provide support and peer coaching; provide feedback to promote continuous quality improvement.

HOW WILL YOU GENERATE AND SUSTAIN STAFF ENTHUSIASM?

An important key to successful implementation of any change effort is fostering staff buy-in.[82] The literature suggests several strategies for effectively generating and sustaining staff enthusiasm for a new way of doing business, including the following:

- Engage with line staff on the ground. Acknowledge the complexity of their jobs and the change effort's impact on their daily tasks.[83]
- Actively involve frontline staff in decisionmaking about the change effort. This could include providing a forum for line staff to contribute insights[84] or holding regular meetings with open discussion.[85]
- Select frontline staff to step into leadership roles or serve as internal champions.[86] For example, staff can serve as internal coaches to train coworkers[87] or help facilitate communication between line staff and management.[88] For more on training and coaching, see this handbook's section on **aligning and building staff competencies** (p. 34).
- Pilot parts of the change with subsets of staff to build success and buy-in.[89]

HOW WILL YOU PROMOTE THE CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE BROADER COMMUNITY?

Though getting your own house in order is critical, successful change efforts typically involve collaboration with external partners and community members.[90] Engaging external partners (e.g., judges, policymakers, other agency leaders) is a critical first step[91] that builds credibility with organizations outside your agency and fosters their support for the change effort.[92] For more information on engaging external partners, see the "**Coordinating with External Partners**" section below.

HOW WILL YOU CREATE COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS BOTH UP AND DOWN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND?

In any typical organization, more attention is usually given to strategies for ensuring staff know what the leadership wants them to do. Organizations could not run without this kind of communication. Many studies reference the importance of improving the upward flow of information to help leaders learn sooner about whether their communications have resulted in the changes they expected and how they can improve them as a means of improving staff buy-in and morale. Questions concerning leaders include the following:

- Are behaviors in the field changing in the ways the leader expected based on the information they provided? Are staff interpreting and using the information in the ways leaders expected? Do staff need more training on the guidance or on how to do what the guidance is directing (see the "**Aligning and Building Staff Competencies**" section below)?
- Are staff trying to use the information the way leadership expected but encountering problems with unaligned internal systems (e.g., policies and procedures, data systems, caseloads)?
- Are staff trying to use the information the way leadership expected but encountering problems with unaligned external systems (e.g., judges, prosecutors, community-based organizations, schools)?

Strategies for supporting bidirectional communication include actively soliciting feedback from line staff through regular meetings or forums; ensuring easy access to digestible information; transmitting messages through multiple channels including emails, verbal announcements, and reports; communicating roles, responsibilities, and expectations; and providing staff with forums and opportunities to engage in problem-solving or to vent frustrations.

Leaders Participate in Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Leaders frame the expectation that change is a process.
2. Leaders create avenues and time for listening, accept feedback about what is and is not working, and strategize with partners about how to improve.
3. Leaders articulate clear and measurable objectives and use data to assess progress.

Leaders Identify and Invite Internal and External Partners

1. Leaders communicate the value of partnerships by inviting partners early and making the time for discussion and reflection.
2. Leaders create space for internal and external partners to cocreate the change and contribute to improving it.
3. Leaders recognize the value of mid-level management and supervisors as having a critical role in fostering bidirectional communication and supporting change.

Questions to Consider: Leading a Change Effort

Do current agency leaders embody qualities of effective change-leaders?

Is the leadership team:
- creative and innovative?
- receptive to new ideas?
- visionary?
- excellent at communication?
- motivating?

If not, how can we augment or build that capacity?

What concrete strategies can you employ to:
- demonstrate commitment to change?
- foster staff buy-in and generate enthusiasm for change?
- promote collaboration and change throughout the broader community?

5

Defining a Clear Mission

Strong leadership requires a clearly articulated vision and goals. In many organizations, this takes the form of a mission statement.

A carefully crafted, clearly defined mission statement that aligns with a research-informed approach communicates important values and priorities for an agency or office. Of course, ensuring the statement is operationalized through the organization's policies, procedures, and practices is equally critical—this is the focus of subsequent chapters in this handbook.

Promoting buy-in around a revised or entirely new mission is an important first step to successfully implementing a new way of operating. When employees feel connected to their organizational mission and supported by management and peers, they are more likely to accept change and support organizational goals.[93]

Probation agency mission statements that align with a research-informed approach would include the following:

- a strengths-based perspective
- positive youth development or outcomes as a primary goal
- partnership with youth and families
- attention to procedural fairness
- individualized and culturally responsive treatment, services, and supports
- collaboration with community stakeholders

The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administration (CJCA) toolkit also makes a critical observation about language, recommending that agencies carefully consider the words they use to describe their mission and that they use developmental language carefully. The toolkit provides a helpful list of potential alternatives to traditional corrections language that support positive youth development.

CJCA POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT LANGUAGE GUIDANCE

Traditional corrections language found in many mission and value statements:

- Reducing juvenile delinquency
- Incarcerated youths
- Troubled youths
- Youth/youth offenders
- Holding youth/youth offenders accountable
- Court-involved youths
- Reclaim juveniles
- Highest-risk youths
- Juvenile offenders
- Promoting offender change
- Behavior and lifestyle associated with criminality
- Youth redemption
- Delinquent youths
- Antisocial
- Freedom-reducing behaviors

Potential alternatives for mission and vision statements that support PYD:

- Youths in our care and custody
- Opportunities to develop personal accountability
- Effective individualized services
- Developmental opportunities
- Improving life outcomes
- Support positive youth development
- Developing skills
- Life skills development
- Strength-based and goal oriented
- Provide opportunities for successful and productive lives
- Become self-reliant
- Responding to the unique needs of our youth
- Recognized as the catalyst for change
- Support youths toward independence
- Fostering competencies
- Creating enrichment opportunities for self-growth
- Prosocial skills
- Workforce development skills
- Independent living skills
- Restorative processes/practices
- Resource offering

Source: "Positive Youth Development Toolkit," p.18.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

Harris County, Texas

The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department is committed to the protection of the public, utilizing intervention strategies that are community-based, family-oriented and least restrictive while emphasizing responsibility and accountability of both parent and child. Core values include:

- We value the belief that everyone is to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We value the belief that each person has innate worth, dignity and the capacity for positive change.
- We value services that are ethical, effective and culturally competent.
- We value and promote a positive image of the department, the employees and our role within the community.
- We value an environment that promotes initiative, productivity, teamwork and professional growth.
- We value an atmosphere which stresses tolerance and is free of discrimination.
- We value developing collaborative efforts with judicial, legislative and community partners.

(Accessed on 09/17/2019)

San Francisco

It is the mission of the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department to serve the needs of youth and families who are brought to our attention with care and compassion; to identify and respond to the individual risks and needs presented by each youth, to engage fiscally sound and culturally competent strategies that promote the best interests of the youth; to provide victims with opportunities for restoration; to identify and utilize the least restrictive interventions and placements that do not compromise public safety; to hold youth accountable for their actions while providing them with opportunities and assisting them to develop new skills and competencies; and contribute to the overall quality of life for the citizens of San Francisco within the sound framework of public safety as outlined in the Welfare & Institutions Code.

(Accessed on 09/17/2019)

Clackamas County, Oregon

The mission of the Clackamas County Juvenile Department is to provide prevention, intervention and juvenile justice services to youth and families so they can experience positive change, repair harm to victims, and become contributing members of our community.

Guiding Principles

- To honor diversity and to treat all persons with respect.
- To involve youth, families, and community partners in creating an effective and responsive department.
- To strive to be innovative leaders in the field of juvenile justice.
- To incorporate evidence based practices in our work with youth and families.
- To honor victims rights and interests throughout all phases of the justice system; to invite victim's participation in determining how to meaningfully address harm.
- To provide opportunities for youth to repair harm to victims and communities.
- To engage youth to have positive involvement in their communities.
- To foster open communication and teamwork in a supportive work environment.
- To demonstrate ethical and honest behavior in all that we do.

(Accessed on 09/17/2019)

Defining Quality in Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Mission statements provide an anchor for the continuous quality improvement process by creating a frame or touchstone for what that agency considers to be the characteristics of quality service (e.g. behaving ethically, being innovative, honoring diversity, acting collaboratively).

Mission Statements Set the Tone for Partnering as a Priority

1. Valuing partners and partnering takes time, but mission statements can make it clear that partnership is a priority.

Questions to Consider: Defining a Clear Mission

The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) published a Positive Youth Development Toolkit to help agencies embrace positive youth development principles; the toolkit aligns well with a research-informed approach to probation and offers some helpful tools for rethinking your mission statement (see the discussion starting on p. 17 of the toolkit).

The toolkit also provides a helpful "visioning activity" that works well in the probation context:

Visioning Activity

Below is a worksheet to begin reviewing your organizations' mission and value statements' alignment with PYD.

1. Begin by writing down your current mission and value statements.

2. Review the video by Simon Sinek "How Great Leaders Inspire Action." Spend some time as leadership of your organization considering your "why" statement. Be careful, it is easy to immediately go back into "what" statements. This process may take several iterations to identify the why of your work.

3. Begin thinking about how your agency's mission aligns with your "why" statement and core concepts of PYD. Be selective and critically think about how you would want others to describe your agency or organization.

Keep in mind that the mission statement must be clearly articulated and put into practice. The statement is meaningless if it is not operationalized in everyday practices.

Source: "CJCA Toolkit: Positive Youth Development," Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, August 9, 2017,

Coordinating with External Partners

Implementing a research-informed approach to juvenile probation requires the buy-in, cooperation, and contributions of many external stakeholders.

Research suggests that identifying and engaging stakeholders early in the change process can strengthen problem-solving, improve program design, and reduce resistance to new approaches.[94] It also suggests that implementation efforts that use shared decisionmaking—including collaborations with the community—consistently produce better outcomes.[95] Urban's research review noted that engaging external stakeholders was an area that agencies and organizations were more likely to overlook at the beginning of their change effort.[96] In many cases, leaders did not anticipate the importance of having all critical stakeholders at the table from the beginning, and only brought in some key partners after learning that the system changes could not work without everyone's buy-in and cooperation.

Which Partners Are Critical to Your Organization's Change Process?

In every community, authentic engagement with and support from **youth, families and supportive adults, and judges** are critical to the successful implementation of research-informed practice. The entire approach centers on youth, families, and their community supports. Without their partnership, the model does not work. Similarly, given judges' unique power to impact supervision requirements and sanctions, ensuring juvenile court judges in your community understand and embrace research-informed practices is necessary for success. Below we provide an overview of resources for engaging with youth, families, and communities more effectively, and for educating judges about strategies that effectively get youth back on track and improve public safety.

Several other stakeholders are likely critical partners in any juvenile probation change effort. Each plays an important role in the justice process and will be important allies in supporting a transition to a research-informed approach. Other likely partners include the following:

- juvenile court personnel
- prosecutors
- defense attorneys
- law enforcement
- representatives from other agencies serving youth, including child welfare, health, behavioral health, and education
- legislators and representatives from state executive branches and city or county government leaders at the local level
- community-based service agencies and organizations (both secular and faith-based)
- community members at large, including those from neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by juvenile justice

The level and type of support that you will need from each partner may depend on the specific reform you are implementing. Give increased attention to those people or agencies whose support is required for the change to be operationalized in practice. For example, if you are working to enhance diversion opportunities that require support from law enforcement, invest additional time and resources in developing buy-in, understanding, and ongoing communication pathways between the two agencies or offices. Similarly, if you are working to improve service matching, it will be key to invest in relationship-building with community service providers. Ultimately, it is important to ensure that all relevant constituencies are engaged and that the right people from each are participating in the change process. We highlight some resources are strategies for accomplishing that in the informational box below. Finally, for prompts to identify critical partners, see the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges' "Getting Started Task List." Note that the list is focused on identifying partners for a graduated sanctions-reform effort, but the questions apply to a range of reforms.

JUVENILE PROBATION IN CONTEXT

The organization of juvenile justice services varies significantly across the US. Juvenile justice agencies' unique contexts directly impact their implementation of research-informed approaches to juvenile probation, particularly when it comes to coordinating with external partners. Juvenile probation is, of course, one of many agencies in the broader juvenile justice system. Where the agency or office "sits," the responsibilities it is charged with, and the autonomy that officers have to make important case-processing and supervision decisions have important implications for external partner relationships.

For example, in some localities, juvenile probation is under the judicial branch, something that could make communication channels with juvenile court judges more natural compared with localities where probation is located under health and human services or the executive branch. Similarly, an office under a broader health and human services agency might naturally have better relationships and coordination between probation and child-welfare-service stakeholders than one that is independent. Moreover, although probation officers in some localities have significant discretion to make decisions about diversion, develop and adjust case plans, respond to youth behavior with incentive and sanction options, and limit the circumstances in which cases must be sent back to court for review or revoked, officers in others may have to get judicial permission for such decisions. Different configurations might require different relationships. However, regardless of how juvenile justice services are administered, identifying critical external partners and building relationships and ongoing coordination with them is a critical step.

Although some probation agencies have more autonomy than others, the question is not whether to partner with external stakeholders, but rather which partners are most critical, when to engage them, and which strategies are most effective in securing and sustaining support. Because every community is different, there is no one "right" answer to these questions. Below are questions for leaders of the change process to consider when determining the types of organizations and roles they need to fully realize their vision and support their strategies for promoting long-term behavior change in youth.

Changing how your agency approaches its work with youth also has ripple effects on how well you can accomplish your mission and on how well other organizations can accomplish theirs.[97] Part of the rationale behind bringing partners to the table is to help each other accomplish missions, proactively identify areas where there could be conflict, and set up problem-solving strategies to address them.

How Will You Engage External Partners?

Urban's research review identified several promising strategies for promoting successful partner engagement in a reform process, including the following:

- **Address constraints on your own staff's time.**[105] Collaboration requires that internal staff have sufficient time to engage in activities. High caseloads can impede collaboration, whereas greater staff autonomy can increase collaboration.
- **Educate partners about the "why" and "what" of the change, and develop a shared set of values** that can facilitate interagency collaboration.[106]
- **Engage key partners early and regularly.** Research shows that effective implementation efforts engage all key partners early in the change process[107] and maintain that engagement throughout the entire process.[108] Early involvement fosters greater buy-in.[109]
- **Create a sense of shared responsibility with clear division of roles.**[110] Building a shared sense of responsibility between partners facilitates change efforts and sustainability,[111] but concerns and confusion about roles and equitable distribution of responsibility can cause problems.[112] Make it clear why the partner is at the table and what is needed from them.
- **Establish formal and informal opportunities for communication and collaboration.**[113] Informal and formal communication are both important for establishing strong partnerships and facilitating learning.[114]
- **Create open channels of communication between agencies involved in supervision.**[115]
- **Hold regular meetings** that bring together key external stakeholders and agencies, including agencies, community partners, community members, and other juvenile justice stakeholders;[116] consider holding meetings in the community to discuss the change.[117]

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVELY PARTNERING WITH YOUTH, FAMILIES, AND SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Families and caregivers are critical partners, and their engagement is crucial both in day-to-day case planning and during a change effort. Common characteristics of successful family engagement include (1) treating families with dignity and respect, (2) providing opportunities for peer-to-peer support, (3) developing partnerships between service professionals and families, (4) facilitating information-sharing between agency personnel and families, and (5) building relationships to promote sustained participation.[98]

It is important to allow youth to define their caregivers or supportive adults;[99] those caregivers are viewed as valuable participants in the case-planning process.[100] For example, the Washington, DC, Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services convenes Youth Family Team Meetings consisting of parents and family members, mentors, teachers, and others involved in the youth's life to help tailor case plans to their individual needs.[101]

For more detailed strategies to involve caregivers or supportive adults in case planning, see the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Family-Engaged Case Planning Model: Key Concepts"(2016).

Some agencies have built system structures distinctly for family-member representation and engagement. For example, the NYC Department of Probation (DOP) worked with Community Connections for Youth to convene a Probation/Parent Association consisting of senior DOP members and family members of justice-involved youth. The association met for six months and strategized ways to increase family engagement. As a result, the DOP established and funded a Parent Support Program, which places "peer coaches" in the probation office to help families navigate the system. Peer coaches help connect families to support groups and programming and are also on call during the evenings and weekends to assist caregivers in crisis.[102]

Similarly, the Family Navigators program in the Lucas County Juvenile Court in Toledo, Ohio, employs "family ambassadors" to help educate and support parents and caregivers and connect them with community resources. The program is operated though a nonprofit (the Center of Hope) so it is strategically dissociated from the juvenile justice system in order to maintain rapport with the families it serves. Family ambassadors have lived experience with the juvenile justice system, and their role is multifaceted and includes calling caregivers to remind families of a court hearing and supporting them through the end of supervision.[103]

Pierce County, Washington, created a Family Council as a way to systematically include families in decisionmaking and change processes. The council consists of parents, young people with prior justice involvement, and court staff representatives and acts as an advisory group to guide program and policy decisions.[104]

Vera Institute of Justice developed a model for family engagement based on the principles of identification, engagement, and empowerment. To learn more about how Sedgwick County, Kansas, implemented a strengths-based family engagement model in their juvenile justice system using these principles, see Vera Institute of Justice's *Building on Family Strengths for Better Outcomes: Involving More Families, More Often, for More Youth*.

For a detailed guide with tools and resources on how to engage caregivers, see the Council of State Governments Justice Center's "Family Engagement and Involvement" resources.

For additional information on effectively engaging caregivers and supportive adults, see Justice for Families' "Family Engagement Resources and Tools."

BUILDING CHAMPIONS IN LOCAL JUDGES

Judges are perhaps the most important partners for agencies implementing a research-informed approach to probation. Judges often make decisions about which cases are diverted away from the system, whether a youth is adjudicated delinquent on a charge, and—for those who are—whether they are released, placed on probation, or committed to state custody. They also typically assign conditions of supervision for youth placed on probation and decide when to revoke a youth who fails to comply with those requirements. Their buy-in is crucial to successful change efforts; without it, most reform efforts will not work.

The field of juvenile justice research and practice has recognized this and developed many educational resources for informing judges about the unique context of adolescence and what improves outcomes for justice-involved youth. The following resources may help you as you work to develop and maintain support from judges in your jurisdiction.

For a juvenile court training curriculum on adolescent development, see Toward Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Juvenile Court Training Curriculum, created by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Model for Change project.

For judicial bench cards relating to principles of adolescent development, see NCJFCJ's bench card for applying principles of adolescent development in delinquency proceedings; for cards relating to mental health, see Judicial Leadership to Address Adolescent Mental Health Needs in Trends in State Courts (2014) from the National Center for State Courts; and for cards relating to trauma, see NCJFCJ's Ten Things Every Juvenile Court Judge Should Know About Trauma and Delinquency and NCTSN's Bench Card for the Trauma-Informed Judge.

For a judicial guide to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's Structured Decision Making model, see the Judicial Guide to the Structured Decision Making Model in Juvenile Justice.

To access targeted training curricula for a fee, see the following:

- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Juvenile Justice Resources and Training Opportunities
- Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps' Advancing Best Practices in Youth Justice Seminar
- Community Resources for Justice's "Training and Assessments"
- Center for Juvenile Justice Reform's Certificate Programs (Georgetown University)
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency's training opportunities

PARTNERING WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPLEMENT SPECIFIC PROBATION REFORMS

Urban's research review identified several partner-engagement strategies specifically related to three of the core research-informed probation practices. These include the following:

- **Partner-engagement strategies to consider when implementing a screening and assessment system**
  - Involve court stakeholders when selecting a tool and in discussions about how the information will be used.[118]
  - Share validation studies and interrater reliability studies with stakeholders.[119]
  - Provide training for judges and attorneys on when and how to use assessment information and when and how information will be communicated to them. For more information, see Vincent, Guy, and Grisso's Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation.[120]
  - Frame assessment results as one additional, reliable piece of information to consider when making decisions and emphasize that assessments enhance, rather than replace, individualized decisionmaking.[121]
- **Partner-engagement strategies to consider when implementing a graduated response system**
  - Demonstrate consistency in approaches to handling violations of supervision to gain and maintain confidence from court personnel.[122]
  - Provide community partners structured decisionmaking tools to increase clarity and transparency regarding the use of sanctions and incentives.[123]
  - Involve youth and families in planning for and assessing the new system to increase perceptions of fairness.[124]
  - Hold information sessions for external partners, during which probation officers discuss their everyday use of graduated responses. Distribute written resources (such as brochures) that outline the rationale for and research supporting implementing graduated responses.
  - Secure judges' approval of the graduated response system before implementation, especially when responses require judicial approval. Failing to do so can undermine probation officers' promises to youth, which damages perceptions of fairness.[125]
- **Partner-engagement strategies to consider when matching services and promoting positive youth development**
  - Establish ongoing collaborations with service providers in the community. Consider generating a community of service providers to whom probation officers can refer youth (based on needs assessment).[126]
  - Build relationships in the neighborhoods youth live in and explore what mentoring opportunities—formal and informal—exist.
  - Work with the supportive adults in a client's life to promote positive outcomes. These might include parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, teachers, or coaches (among others).

External Partners Help Continuously Improve Quality

1. Youth in community supervision will interact with many organizations, and many organizations contribute to what they experience. Youth and their families provide important feedback and perspectives on those experiences.

2. Organizations providing services to youth or contributing to their supervision plans can provide valuable information about how changes are occurring.

External to Your Agency but Not External to Your Team

1. "External" refers to what organization, agency, or department partners are affiliated with, hired by, or report to. Integrating external partners as part of your team is one key to success.

Questions to Consider: Coordinating with External Partners

Which external stakeholders must support the change process in order for it to be successful?

Will you need different partners for different aspects of reform?

How will you engage each of these organizations or groups?

How will you facilitate buy-in from each of these organizations or groups?

What mechanisms will you use or create to facilitate ongoing communication with representatives from each organization or group?

Do you meet regularly with each stakeholder? If not, can you convene regular meetings to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration?

7

Aligning and Building Staff Competencies

In addition to having strong leadership, a clear vision for the change process, and key partners onboard, successfully implementing a research-informed approach to probation requires that staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (i.e., staff competencies) to perform the core tasks identified in the framework. We focus on frontline probation staff, but supervisors and administrators need similar knowledge, skills, and abilities to demonstrate their commitment and to support frontline staff in correctly applying and mastering these competencies.

A research-informed approach individualizes responses and plans for youth. Successfully applying this approach requires staff who understand how to respond to different needs, how to problem-solve across circumstances, and how to tailor their approach to different cultural contexts. In other words, the approach requires some practice and guidance, and staff will need supervisors and administrators to support them as they work to master these skills.

The time needed to build capacity, as well as the supports needed to acquire new competencies, will vary by office or agency, depending in large part on how much the new approach differs from the existing one. For example, if the existing approach is a more traditional, surveillance-based model, or staff have not previously used standardized risk and needs assessments, staff will likely need a longer transition period than if their agency has already adopted such models and methods.

This section provides concrete strategies to help leadership identify necessary competencies, assess current staff skill sets, set expectations about new requirements, and implement training and coaching plans (figure 3).

WHAT'S IN A NAME? SHOULD YOU CONSIDER NEW STAFF TITLES?

Similar to an agency's mission statement, job titles signal priorities and responsibilities for staff at each level. In most jurisdictions, juvenile probation officers are called just that. However, several jurisdictions are rethinking that title and shifting it to embrace a focus on support rather than surveillance. For example, Bexar County, Texas, Clackamas County, Oregon, and King County, Washington, all use the title probation "counselors." In Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, where the Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Youth Services oversees juvenile probation, probation officers are called "human services workers." There is no one best title for such positions, and making this type of change may require an extensive process, including negotiations with unions in some states. However, it might be worth considering as part of a broader change effort.

What Are the Overall Considerations for Assessing and Supporting Staff in Learning New Competencies?

As shown in figure 3, there are four elements that are key to the process of assessing and aligning staff competencies: (1) identifying needed competencies, (2) assessing the extent to which staff already possess these competencies or need to build new ones, (3) setting expectations about the importance of these competencies and timelines for mastering them, and (4) creating systems to help staff attain and improve competencies. Research provides several general considerations to help administrators and leaders design planning efforts, as well as some specific strategies for each element of the process (detailed in the sections below). Overarching considerations for planning out your systems for building competency include the following:

- **Timing, content, and intensity of training and other supports will likely differ for staff at different levels and roles:**[127]
  - Training leadership (including supervisors) before line staff provides a more supportive structure for staff.[128]
  - Leadership needs training on the reasons for and substance of the change, and how to manage the change process.[129]
  - Supervisors can become more effective in supporting the change if they are trained in coaching.[130]
- **Staff with the following characteristics may be more receptive to a research-informed approach:**
  - younger staff[131]
  - staff with higher levels of formal education[132]
  - staff who are motivated to learn[133]
  - staff who approach their work through a balance of law enforcement and social work–oriented strategies[134]
- **Staff with the following characteristics may find the change more challenging:**
  - more experienced staff[135]
  - staff with low confidence[136]
  - younger staff may have a harder time relating to the information because they are closer in age to the youth they are serving[137]

FIGURE 3
KEY STEPS FOR ASSESSING, ALIGNING, AND SUSTAINING STAFF COMPETENCIES

Identify staff competencies needed

Assess the extent to which staff (or candidates) have these competencies

Set expectations around new competencies

Create systems to support competency attainment and growth.

What Staff Competencies Are Required?

Building on existing resources in the field (see, e.g., *CJI's Roadmap for Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections*; Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps' *Probation System Review Guidebook*; and National Institute of Corrections' *Evidence-Based Practice Skills Assessment for Criminal Justice Organizations and Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections*), Urban has identified the mindset, knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for implementing a research-informed approach to probation (figure 4 offers a summary snapshot of these requirements).

MINDSET

Aligning probation practices with research on adolescent development and effective practice requires a specific mindset that is best characterized by a commitment to the following:

- **Ongoing learning.**[138] Probation officers should be committed to attending regular trainings on new practices and approaches, interested in attending professional conferences, focused on best practices, and able to develop new skills on the job. They should take initiative by looking for opportunities to improve performance.

- **A strength-based approach.**[139] Probation officers should identify youths' strengths, identify strengths in families and communities, and engage clients to plan for activities and goals that fit their strengths.

- **Cultural responsivity.**[140] Probation officers should respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds. They must challenge bias and intolerance and should not discriminate against youth, their families, or colleagues on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or physical, mental, and economic conditions.

- **Data-driven decisionmaking.** Probation officers should embrace and use data, information, and input from a variety of sources to guide their actions.[141]

- **Promoting positive youth development outcomes.**[142] Probation officers should work to promote healthy development as part of success on probation. This includes determining the extent to which youth are connected with supportive adults and prosocial activities in their communities, making educational achievements, and accepting employment opportunities, among other connections.

KNOWLEDGE

Aligning practices with research also requires knowledge based on key concepts that relate to the following:

- **Adolescent development.** A core premise of a research-informed approach to juvenile probation is that adolescents are different from adults, and that targeting behavior modification strategies to their unique needs and strengths promotes better outcomes. Embracing the approach requires a basic understanding of how youth are different and how those differences are relevant for probation practices. (For a comprehensive overview of development and implications for juvenile probation, see Urban's *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Justice: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*. For publicly available training materials, see the Juvenile Law Center's *Kids Are Different: How Knowledge of Adolescent Development Theory Can Aid Decision-Making in Court*; note that RFK Children's Action Corps also offers training sessions for a fee.)

- **Positive Youth Development and successful outcomes.** Positive Youth Development is a strengths-based framework based on the idea that all youth have the capacity to succeed when given the necessary opportunities, supports, and relationships. It focuses on building resilience by providing youth opportunities to learn new skills, exercise self-efficacy, and connect to prosocial relationships while addressing key risk factors.[143] For publicly available training materials, see ACT for Youth's Positive Youth Development 101 curriculum; Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators' Positive Youth Development toolkit; and the NCYC/NPJS Using Positive Youth Development Strategies: Facilitator Guide.

- **Principles of effective supervision intervention.** Over the past few decades, research has identified which interventions and strategies are most effective in reducing recidivism for youth and adults on probation.[144] Aligning research and practice in juvenile probation requires embracing the key principles of effective intervention (the informational box below offers additional information). For publicly available training materials, see the Corrections Institute at the University of Cincinnati's (UCCI) PowerPoint presentation on Effective Practices in Community Supervision, and note that UCCI and CJI also offer training sessions for a fee.

- **Risk-Needs-Responsivity.** The Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model provides the foundation both for principles of effective supervision intervention and a research-informed approach to juvenile justice. The model clearly outlines who to target (risk), what to target (need), and how to target (responsivity) services to most effectively reduce recidivism. For guidance on training staff on risk assessment systems, see the Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation (Step 5: Training) and the CORE Agency Training Guide. For publicly available training materials, see this web presentation on the RNR model and note that the National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners offers training for a fee.

NIC'S PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION

Research has identified several strategies that reduce recidivism for people involved in the justice system. In partnership with the Crime and Justice Institute, the National Institute of Corrections has synthesized key findings into the following eight principles of effective interventions:[145]

- Assess risk/needs.
- Enhance intrinsic motivation.
- Target interventions based on the Risk-Need-Responsivity model.
- Train staff in cognitive behavioral treatment methods with directed practice.
- Increase positive reinforcement.
- Engage ongoing support in natural communities.
- Measure relevant processes/practices.
- Provide measurement feedback.

SKILLS

Specific skills required include the following:

- **Communication skills.**[146] Probation officers should communicate clearly, accessibly, and accurately with youth and caregivers, ideally incorporating the communication methods that are most accessible for youth and caregivers (e.g., text messages, e-mail). They must be able to help youth and caregivers understand and retain conditions of probation. When communicating with youth, they should model positive language and social behavior, including speaking positively and using respectful body language.

- **Interpersonal skills.** Probation officers should be able to interact with youth and families from all backgrounds, work with them effectively, and meet them where they are in terms of the change process.

- **Interviewing skills.**[147] Probation officers should express empathy when interviewing, avoid labeling, express belief in youths' ability to change, and employ cognitive-behavioral strategies.

- **Excellent discretionary judgment.** Though research-informed practice is built on data-driven decisionmaking, it is critical that probation officers maintain discretion throughout the process to respond effectively at each decision point with each individual case. They will likely make hundreds of decisions—large and small—over the life of a case, and they must be able to exercise good judgment at each point.

ABILITIES

Finally, aligning practice with research requires that staff at all levels develop critical abilities, including the ability to achieve the following:

- **Build trust with youth and caregivers.**[148] Probation officers should interact respectfully with youth and caregivers in a manner that is perceived as positive, truthful, and fair. They should be reliable and follow through with promises and commitments. They should also engage in collective problem-solving and collaborate with youth and parents to set short-term, attainable goals.

- **Model prosocial behavior.** Through their interactions with youth, probation officers can model prosocial behavior and show youth (rather than tell them) how to behave and make choices that benefit themselves and others. Officers can demonstrate these behaviors by being prompt, greeting others, following up on tasks, respecting other people's feelings, treating people with respect, and praising prosocial comments and actions.[149]

- **Identify and collaborate with community partners.**[150] Probation officers should collaborate with community organizations such as schools, service providers, and other community partners in youths' neighborhoods, as well as with a range of internal and external stakeholders to connect youth with programming. They should develop and maintain effective working relationships with these organizations/agencies. When working with others, probation officers should promote the collective ownership of desired

FIGURE 4

CORE COMPETENCIES OF A RESEARCH-INFORMED APPROACH TO JUVENILE PROBATION

Mindset	Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
▪ ongoing learning ▪ a strengths-based approach ▪ cultural responsivity ▪ data-driven decisionmaking ▪ promoting positive developmental outcomes	▪ adolescent development ▪ principles of effective practice ▪ Risk-Needs-Responsivity ▪ positive youth development	▪ communication ▪ interpersonal skills ▪ interviewing ▪ judgment	▪ building trust with youth and caregivers ▪ model prosocial behavior ▪ identify and collaborate with community partners ▪ coordinate community resources ▪ administer and use RNA model ▪ apply responses and incentives

outcomes for youth, and can do so by communicating and building support for a common goal, creating a safe space to share ideas and brainstorm together, and holding each other accountable to commitments.

- **Coordinate community resources.**[151] Recognizing that community-based interventions are generally the most appropriate for youth, probation officers should be able to coordinate formal and informal community-based services and opportunities for youth. This requires learning and staying up-to-date on the resources that are available in youth clients' neighborhoods, including people and organizations who might be outside of the formal service sector (e.g., local mentors, communities of faith). It is important to know what traditional services are available for addressing substance use and mental health concerns, and it is equally important to know about other available resources in youths' communities, such as mentoring, recreation, employment, and service opportunities.

- **Assess and incorporate risk and needs information.**[152] Probation officers should be able to administer screening and assessment tools consistently and accurately, interpret the results correctly, and make override judgments where appropriate and in accordance with agency policy. Additionally, they should be able to use the information gleaned from assessments to make appropriate case-planning decisions.

STRUCTURED DECISIONMAKING TOOLS

Structured decisionmaking tools are research- and evidence-based assessments that guide decisionmaking at key points in a youth's case. Examples of such tools include the following:

- intake and release assessment instruments
- detention-risk-assessment instruments;
- risk assessment instruments
- strengths and needs assessment instruments
- disposition matrices
- service referral matrices
- graduated response matrices
- incentive matrices

Each of these tools use research to guide decisions, use case planning and recommendations at various points in the justice process (including intake and diversion), use preadjudication detention, and use postdisposition supervision. For example, intake and release assessments provide critical information to inform decisionmaking at the referral stage, allowing intake officers to release or divert any youth who does not meet criteria for (or require) formal case processing. Similarly, graduated response matrices can provide structured guidance for responding to misbehavior while on supervision, and suggest appropriate sanctions based on the severity and frequency of noncompliance. These tools are meant to supplement (not replace) a probation officer's discretion in making key decisions, and officers will likely need to consider other factors and use their best judgment in making decisions or recommendations. These assessments must be equitable, reliable, and comprehendible in order to advance a fair juvenile justice system.

- **Apply responses and incentives in accordance with agency guidelines.**[153] Probation officers should be able to respond to clients' behavior using sanctions and incentives as outlined in agency policy and in accordance with structured decisionmaking tools where applicable. They should also be able to clearly and directly explain the graduated responses to youth and family members.

How Can Our Agency Assess Current Staff Competencies?

Systematically assessing current staff knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors (competencies) to see how they align with the above requirements provides critical context about the resources and time needed to build core competencies with existing staff. It may be that current staff were hired for a different type of work and therefore have a set of strengths and skills that differs from new requirements.[154] Ensuring skills align with job responsibilities can lead to greater staff satisfaction, less turnover, and increased success when implementing new programs.[155] Although there may be a general understanding of current staff competencies, conducting a comprehensive skills assessment can inform an organization about its readiness for change, in that it identifies needs in training, professional development support, and hiring.

Urban's review of the research identified the following strategies you can consider as you develop a plan to assess current staff skills.

- **Use a mix of systematic assessment approaches,** including surveys, focus groups, and/or direct observations.[156]
- **Observe interactions between probation officers and youth and family clients,** or make audio or video recordings of interactions and review them (this can provide insights that other methods lack).[157] Because body language and tone are as important as the words people say, it is difficult to assess all competencies through self-report and discussion. Supervisor reviews of audio or video recordings of interactions or direct observations are useful.
- **Select or design assessment instruments that explore a range of staff proficiencies,** including technical knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as staff attitudes toward the requirements of a new approach, their motivation to learn, and their openness to change.[158]
- **Make sure to assess skills that are difficult to train** (such as interpersonal skills and good judgment) to enable better targeting of resources to staff with the greatest needs.[159]

HELPFUL STAFF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

There is no need to reinvent the wheel as you work to assess current staff competencies. Several existing tools might be viable or inform your design of an assessment approach. These include the following:

- **TCU Institute of Behavioral Research's Organizational Readiness for Change survey tool.**[160] This tool can help you better understand staff readiness for change in terms of specific attitudes that can make a person more or less effective at implementing new evidence-based practices.
- **TCU's Criminal Justice Survey of Organizational Functioning survey tool.**[161] This tool can help you understand the specific skills required for implementing effective evidence-based practices in a criminal justice agency.
- **Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale.**[162] This is a scale for assessing staff attitudes toward existing requirements, their openness to change, and their divergence from norms.
- **Evidence-Based Practice Skills Assessment (EBPSA) for Criminal Justice Organizations.**[163] This survey tool asks staff to rank how much they agree or disagree with various questions aimed at specific topics such as organizational support, strengths, interviewing skills, analytical thinking, critical thinking, ethics, growth, teamwork, and use of positive reinforcements as an individual and in team settings.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE SKILLS ASSESSMENT FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS

The EBPSA, developed by Community Resources for Justice's Crime and Justice Institute, is particularly well-aligned with a research-informed approach to probation. The tool uses brief self-report surveys to assess the extent to which staff demonstrate skills required to successfully implement evidence-based practices in corrections settings. It is designed for both supervisors and frontline staff. Results are reported at the team or staff levels and indicate the skills staff are regularly demonstrating as well as gaps that might inhibit effective implementation (the tool does not generate individual results). Three versions of the form exist: one on individual perspectives, one on team perspectives, and one that combines the two.

The EBPSA assesses the following ten topics:

- organizational support
- strengths-based approach
- interviewing skills
- analytical skills
- critical thinking skills
- communication skills
- ethics
- growth
- teamwork
- use of positive reinforcement

The tool is publicly available; all versions of the tool and a scoring guide are available online.

How Can Our Agency Support Professional Development for Current Staff?

Providing current staff with the resources, time, and opportunity to develop new competencies is an important early step in the implementation process. It is equally important to clearly communicate to staff what the new requirements and expectations are, what opportunities they will be offered to build necessary skills, and how the shift will impact performance assessments, something that can mitigate concerns or fears about new responsibilities.

Effectively setting and communicating expectations involves writing down and sharing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, as well as key responsibilities for each staff position. It also requires agency leaders to align performance standards, criteria, and processes for review and feedback with the new competencies and expectations.[164] As the adage goes, "what gets measured gets done," so it is important to track and reflect on each element of your new approach. For example, as you work to ensure that youth are matched to services and opportunities that meet their specific needs, observing how often that is happening and providing feedback or strategies for improving it to frontline staff members is important. Merely tracking how often the risk, needs, and strengths tool is administered misses the opportunity to collect information about how the tool is actually being used to inform effective case planning.

Successful professional development strategies use multiple phases of training, coaching, and individualized feedback,[165] with clearly defined goals in each phase (e.g., building foundational knowledge, developing specific skills, refreshing skills).[166] Though there is a large body of research on effective practice around training and feedback, a comprehensive review of this research is outside this project's scope. For a summary of the implementation research related to staff training and coaching, see the fifth chapter of Fixsen and colleagues' (2005) *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature* and the National Implementation Research Network's "Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices" for a related tool. In the following section, we identify a short, targeted list of training strategies that we identified through an independent literature review (the informational box below provides key takeaways; see Derrick-Mills and coauthors [2019] for a full description of methodology and findings). However, we want to underscore that although training is a necessary first step, it is not sufficient for promoting full implementation on its own. Ongoing coaching, individualized feedback, and booster-training opportunities are critical to success.

KEY TAKEAWAYS ON EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND COACHING

- Develop a phased staff-development effort that includes training and coaching. Ensure that the effort:
  - extends over time;
  - provides support for building foundational knowledge and practical skills; and
  - provides individualized feedback.
- Adjust development efforts to specific staff levels, individual characteristics of staff, and special populations of youth.
- Provide opportunities for staff at all levels to assume leadership roles or serve as change leaders (e.g., opportunities to lead coaching efforts or develop staff training).
- Plan ahead for facilitating the development of competencies for new staff.

TRAINING

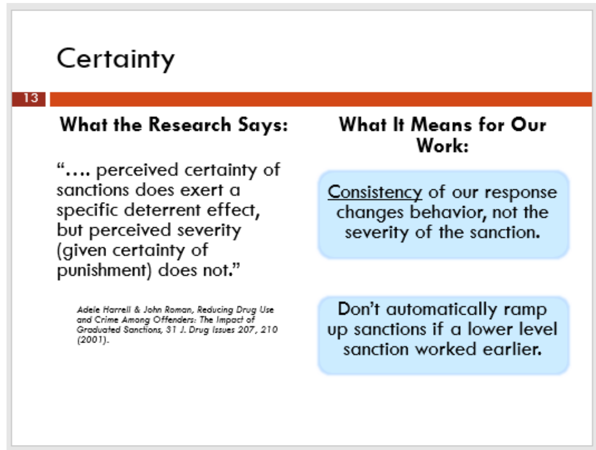
Training provides a critical foundation and helps staff transition to a new way of doing things. Literature suggests that training is more effective in building knowledge than it is in building skills. As previously discussed, many of the needed skills require discretion as well as problem-solving and decisionmaking abilities. This means staff will have to test their new knowledge in the field and then get support in adjusting the ways they apply that knowledge in different circumstances. The **section on coaching** below offers more information on how to support that approach. Some types of training strategies build knowledge more effectively than others; the literature suggests using the following strategies to make training more effective:

- **Begin training programs with a clear justification for the "why,"** the foundations and research-basis for the new program, and why it is being adopted.
- **Demonstrate how skills and principles can be applied in various settings and interactions,**[167] and structure training to integrate new activities and expectations into existing work environments and sets of practices.[168]
- **Prioritize active learning.**[169] This can include modeling the application of skills and principles in various settings;[170] role-playing interactions with youth;[171] and examining officers' own thoughts and perceptions of their work.[172]
- **Incorporate peer discussion and support,**[173] particularly to allow officers to raise and address any fears or anxieties they have about the new approach.[174]
- **Develop supplementary training materials.** These might include the following:
  - references to external information sources[175]
  - online resources including videos and slides from presentations[176] (see, e.g., the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) Graduated Responses for Youth Under DJS Supervision PowerPoint)
  - toolkits[177]
  - structured decisionmaking tools that reinforce training information[178]
  - brochures or newsletters circulated regularly to reinforce foundational knowledge[179]
- **Regularly review data to determine where retraining or adjusted training is needed.**[180]

TRAINING COLLATERAL

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' Graduated Responses for Youth Under DJS Supervision PowerPoint is used for training supervision officers on the graduated response system for youth under DJS supervision. The presentation includes a variety of components, including goals for the training, a summary of the philosophy behind graduated responses, and how the research specifically translates into practical guidance for DJS staff. The "Certainty" slide, shown to the right, offers an example of such a component.

Source: Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Graduated Responses for Youth Under DJS Supervision (Training PowerPoint), slide 13.



STAFF TRAINING AIMED AT REDUCING REARREST (STARR) PROGRAM

The STARR program is a training program that has been used to train federal community supervision officers in a cognitive-behavioral approach to supervision based on the Risk-Needs-Responsivity model. The training program is divided into the following phased components:

- **A three-and-a-half-day classroom session** covers STARR's research basis (including the RNR model), skill demonstrations (including in-person and videos), and opportunities for officers to practice skills and receive feedback.
- **Audiotaped interactions with clients** include an initial meeting, an interaction three months later, and another interaction three months after that. Coaches provide feedback to the officers on each of the tapes.
- **Four booster training sessions** in the year following the initial training offer individualized coaching and feedback. The booster sessions focus on addressing skill deficits as identified through the audiotapes.

For a detailed account of how one district implemented STARR, see Clodfelter and colleagues' (2016) "A Case Study of the Implementation of Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Rearrest (STARR)."

ALIGNING JUVENILE PROBATION WITH EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Stakeholders in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, have worked for nearly a decade to adopt a research-informed approach to juvenile probation that is grounded in an individualized, strengths-based approach and promotes positive youth development. In Milwaukee, youth probation is administered by the Division of Youth and Family Services within the Department of Health and Human Services. In 2018, and in partnership with an external consultant, the Division of Youth and Family Services launched a comprehensive training and coaching plan to implement a new case-management model. Their approach aligns closely with research on effective implementation and included the following components:

- **An initial half-day training** with all intake officers explained why changes were needed and how they aligned with research on what works to improve outcomes for kids.
- **On-site observations and case file reviews** by the consultant partner informed the development of a tailored case-management action guide designed specifically for Milwaukee County.

A multiphased training and coaching curriculum that included:

- **three three-hour "readiness sessions" for all supervisors** to introduce the change and ensure full understanding of new policies and procedures;
- **a two-day workshop for all staff** on the fundamentals of the new case management approach;
- **four months of staff-client observations of and feedback** for the new approach in practice; and
- **a series of booster sessions** to underscore key messages and problem-solve pieces not working well in practice.

Milwaukee County is still in the implementation process and working toward continuous quality improvements, meaning it will take some time to see how these changes impact key outcomes. However, their thoughtful, research-informed approach suggests they are off to a great start.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

In 2011, the National Center for Juvenile Justice published *Implementing Effective Case Management Strategies: A Guide for Probation Administrators* specifically for juvenile probation administrators, outlining strategies to implement effective case management. The guide provides a training checklist that summarizes potential topics for inclusion, including the following:[181]

- effective probation case management
- policies and procedures related to timeliness and case planning
- new assessment instruments
- identifying priorities for case plans
- writing case-plan action statements
- engaging families, schools, and other stakeholders in the supervision, placement, and aftercare process
- communicating the plan to youth, families, providers, and other community partners
- monitoring/documenting progress
- rewarding progress and sanctioning noncompliance or lack of progress
- recording intermediate outcomes
- using data to inform implementation outcomes and plan effectively across the department

COACHING

Research suggests that training alone may help improve knowledge, but it is insufficient for altering the behaviors of justice professionals. Evidence is growing that juvenile justice professionals need more than repeated training or even coaching focused on building knowledge. For example, Taxman and colleagues (2014) conducted a rigorous study to test the effectiveness of different combinations of training and coaching on motivational interviewing. That study found that staff who had received a three-day booster training focused on additional knowledge-building and coaching focused on the same were no more capable of conducting motivational interviewing than staff who had only received one day of training on the topic. On the other hand, staff who received the three days of additional training and who were also provided coaching sessions designed to develop internal champions to support the change process mastered the change more successfully than either of the other two groups. The studies suggest that justice professionals need the opportunity to test their new knowledge and to ask questions after they have done so to gain confidence in using it appropriately.[182]

A primary value in coaching is providing individualized feedback. Individualization recognizes each person's unique knowledge, attitudes, skills, and motivations and targets their particular challenges. Coaching builds on the competency-assessment activities to essentially create individualized learning plans, and then relies on a continuous stream of information on individual actions and performance to address challenges and hone skills.

How Does Coaching Differ from Supervision?

Supervisors can be coaches, but coaching is merely one activity a supervisor can undertake, and people who are not supervisors can be coaches. One key to coaching is for people to feel like they can ask coaches questions and raise challenges with the understanding that the relationship is about learning and improving. Coaching will not succeed if staff are worried that revealing their weaknesses will count against them in performance reviews.

How Do You Ensure Appropriate People Are Available to Provide Coaching?

You can hire external coaches, but it is difficult to sustain that model. Well-trained internal staff who enjoy learning and teaching may be a better long-term option. Coaching can provide another avenue of professional growth for staff who may not be ready to supervise but are ready for a new challenge. Alternatively, coaching can help supervisors become more effective by providing them additional tools. Whoever the coach is, it is important to train them in coaching techniques.

How Can Routine Actions and Interactions Be Captured for Reflection and Feedback?

The literature suggests good management-information systems allow for easy review of steps completed and actions recorded. Audio or video recordings of probation officers' interactions with youth provide information on tone and substance.

How Do You Ensure Coaches and Officers Have Sufficient Time for Coaching?

One of the biggest barriers to making change in an organization is time, and insufficient attention is paid to helping staff manage additional time to learn new techniques. Coaching sessions are one way of providing officers opportunities to practice their skills and receive feedback. Ongoing coaching sessions that provide individualized feedback,[183] assessment,[184] and reinforcement[185] are critical to success. Staff need ongoing time set aside to participate in coaching sessions. Staff often cannot control their own workload, but leaders have options. Is there a way to reduce per-person caseloads to enable staff time for ongoing learning? Can supervisors temporarily take over portions of caseloads to better understand challenges and free up probation officers' time?

The literature suggests some coaching strategies that include the following:

- **Provide individualized feedback for each officer,** not just overall group feedback.[186] Reviewing audiotape interactions can be a helpful tool for providing individualized feedback.[187]

- **Sustain coaching sessions.** Although the research does not identify an optimal frequency, some organizations experienced success with monthly coaching and/or booster sessions[188] that continued at least one year after the initial training.[189]

TIPS FOR SELECTING COACHES

- Identify people who excel during the initial training to receive additional training and serve as coaches.
- Select coaches who demonstrate performance skill, enthusiasm, and time-management skills.

SUPPORTING ONGOING REVIEW AND REINFORCEMENT IN CASE PLANNING

Agencies can help staff develop competency beyond initial training sessions by providing ongoing opportunities for staff to practice assessing cases and creating case plans. Immediately after training ends, organizations can require probation officers to complete practice cases (including conducting an assessment and using the assessment information to develop a case plan) to demonstrate their proficiency before assessing youth.[193] Additionally, occasional booster trainings can provide opportunities for staff to practice a case from start to finish and for agencies to identify any deficiencies.[194] Having a group of officers test the same case can also provide ongoing measures of interrater reliability (see the **section on policies and procedures** below).

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAINING AND COACHING SUPERVISORS AND LEADERSHIP

Agencies can benefit from providing additional and specialized training for management and leadership. Options include the following:

- Provide additional training about the foundations and research-informed probation.[195]
- Focus on creating buy-in during training for leadership.[196]
- Train leadership before training frontline staff.[197]
- Encourage administrators, managers, and supervisors to attend staff trainings.[198]
- Train management on leadership skills in promoting and sustaining change.

- **Decrease the frequency of coaching sessions once officers consistently demonstrate proficiency.**[190] For example, in one district implementing Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Rearrest, officers submitted two audio tapes each month to their coaches until they were considered proficient in a skill, at which point the requirement decreased to two recordings a quarter.[191]

- **Emphasize the value of process and continued improvement.**[192]

How Can Our Agency Hire and Train Highly Skilled Staff?

Preparing existing staff to assume new responsibilities and roles is a significant undertaking, but attention should also be given to recruiting and training new staff to support the new approach. Some of the competencies critical to implementing a research-informed approach are difficult to teach[202] (e.g., the ability to build trust with youth and caregivers, communication skills, cultural responsivity, and commitment to ongoing learning) so it is important that job descriptions for new hires are updated to reflect new competencies, that leaders identify them, and that associated hiring practices screen for them during the hiring process. Notably, research has shown that a person's motivation to learn is the strongest predictor of their understanding of evidence-based practices.[203]

UPDATE JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND HIRING CRITERIA

Though it might seem like a distraction from more pressing tasks, it is wise to spend time revising job descriptions for open positions (as necessary) to clearly outline and formalize the roles and expectations for staff at each level. Making this change might require negotiating with a professional union or getting approval from a separate agency, so it is important to explore what steps are required and what approvals are necessary early when revising job descriptions. If necessary, consider developing a short-term work-around to communicate new requirements and expectations until an official change can be made. In addition, ensure hiring-review processes and criteria are updated to reflect new competencies and priorities for hiring.

PROVIDE CONSISTENT TRAINING FOR NEW HIRES

- Develop an explicit strategy for training new hires.[204]
- Build resources into the budget to support that strategy for multiple groups of new hires.[205]
- Provide training before new hires begin work.[206]
- Set reasonable expectations for newly trained officers to encourage them to use new skills.[207]
- Keep training consistent so that new and old hires are using the same approach.[208]

TRAINING RESOURCES SPECIFIC TO RELEVANT TOPICS THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST

- Building authentic relationships
  - This Building Authentic Relationships (BARS) online curriculum provides concrete strategies for building trust and creating healthy relationships with youth on probation.
- Motivational Interviewing (MI)
  - See this helpful introductory video from the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers.
  - More information and guidance on how treatment practitioners can adopt MI, see "Understanding and Using Brief Interventions in the Juvenile Justice System,"[199] published by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, "Motivational Interviewing for Probation Officers: Tipping the Balance Toward Change,"[200] and *Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole*.[201]
  - See Pennsylvania's "Motivational Interviewing Implementation and Practice Manual" for detailed, step-by-step guidance for implementing MI practices, as well as example policy statements and practical tools to support uptake.
- Counteracting unconscious bias
  - See this helpful overview from the National Juvenile Justice Network.
  - Another assessment, the Implicit Association Test, can help identify how unconscious bias may be impacting your work.
  - This training for police officers to counteract bias is also available from the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR JUVENILE COUNSELOR IN CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OREGON

JOB INTRODUCTION

- Do you believe that all youth are capable of success?
- Do you want to make a difference in the lives of youth and their families?
- Do you have creative problem solving skills?
- Do you enjoy working in a team environment?
- Do you have exceptional communication and organizational skills?
- Do you have a personal commitment to putting ethics into action by
- holding yourself to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty,
- and objectivity?

If you answered "yes" to the questions above, we want you to join our team at the County's 24-hour Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center as a Juvenile Counselor 1. If selected for this position, you will be responsible for accepting custody of youth from police officials, assessing youth's needs and developing release plans. You will also have an opportunity to supervise a caseload of youth who are referred to the Juvenile Department for criminal charges.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE for this position will be someone who:

Creates a Respectful and Safe Environment by promoting a working environment and culture in which employees and all the youth, families, and victims we serve feel physically and emotionally safe and able to express themselves without repercussion. The ideal candidate is committed to serving diverse populations, and recognizes that all youth, families, and the victims we serve must be treated with dignity and respect, and must not experience discrimination, bias, or a lack of equity in services. These diverse populations include but are not limited to people of all races, ethnicities, and national origins; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people; individuals with physical or mental disability; people of all ages, religions, genders, political affiliations, veterans, and people of various socio-economic statuses.

Embodies "SPIRIT" by demonstrating a commitment to the Clackamas County core values of Service, Professionalism, Integrity, Respect, Individual Accountability, and Trust in their work (Clackamas County Core Values).

Builds Relationships by sustaining cooperative working relationships with internal and external customers, partners and stakeholders.

Communication is respectful to others, shows self-awareness, empathy, situational appropriateness, and professionalism when communicating verbally, non-verbally, and in writing.

Commits to Teamwork and Collaboration through team unity by working effectively towards a shared goal, encourages sharing of information, productive problem solving and putting team success first.

Demonstrates Excellent Customer Service by anticipating, assessing, and responding effectively to the needs of the diverse youth, families, and victims we serve, both internally and externally, including proactive engagement to keep customers informed.

Embraces Continual Learning by displaying an ongoing commitment to, and takes ownership for, learning and self-improvements, demonstrates willingness to grow within the job as technology, organizational changes demand it.

Honors Confidentiality in compliance with privacy laws, business needs, including all juvenile matters, and employee/team relations, using only for the purpose required to fulfill employment obligations.

Seeks to Problem Solve as evidence by using critical thinking and analytical skills, identifies alternative strategies bringing a solution-focused approach to address challenging or difficult solutions.

Engages in Self-Management as evidenced by the individual's ability to demonstrate dependability, flexibility, responsibility, accountability and the ability to develop strategies to effectively manage tasks of one's work.

Puts Ethics into Action by holding himself or herself to a high standard of professional, honest and objective behavior. Maintains professional relationships and appropriate social, emotional and physical boundaries at all times with the youth and families the Juvenile Department is entrusted to serve.

Source: Clackamas County, Oregon job posting, Juvenile Counselor I, accessed September 11, 2019.

Continued ▸

Sample Job Description for Juvenile Counselor in Clackamas County, Oregon (continued)

REQUIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS/ TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS:*

- At least one (1) year of experience working with at-risk youth
- Working knowledge and understanding of adolescent behavior and development
- Experience setting priorities and managing workload with minimal supervision
- Experience working with and having a positive rapport with individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Effective verbal and written communication skills
- Strong interpersonal skills that translate into all of the following:
  - Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and partnerships both internally and externally
  - Ability to build rapport, engage youth and families, provide resources and positive connections to the community and pro-social activities
  - Independent decision making and problem solving skills
  - Be detail-oriented, respectful of the needs and interests of others, assertive, accessible and approachable, and self-directed (able to work without close supervision)
  - Possess cultural awareness and the ability to work well with diverse groups of individuals
  - Ability to handle a wide range of situations and circumstances effectively, positively and professionally
- Must pass a post-offer, pre-employment drug test.
- Must pass an extensive background investigation, which will include national fingerprint records check.
- Driving is required for County business on a regular basis or to accomplish work.
- Incumbents must possess a valid driver's license, and possess and maintain an acceptable driving record throughout the course of employment.

PREFERRED SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS/ TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS:*

- Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Sociology, Psychology or a related field
- Experience working with juvenile offenders in the juvenile justice system
- Case management experience working with youth
- Experience using screening and assessment tools related to mental health status and substance use
- Experience preparing for and presenting cases in court
- Experience partnering with other agencies to assist youth and families in being successful

How Can Our Agency Provide Ongoing Review and Feedback?

As noted above, communicating expectations to new and existing staff and aligning review criteria and processes is critical to successfully implementing a change effort.[209] Developing written policies to guide performance review and feedback, reinforcing staff expectations and promoting implementation of reform tasks, or rewriting existing policies to align with new parameters can lay a strong foundation of transparency and clear communication.[210] Monitoring and performance measurement is less threatening if goals are clear.[211] Clarifying and emphasizing that review is used to learn from and improve practice, not to identify poor performers, can also mitigate fears.[212]

Urban's literature review uncovered several considerations for aligning performance measurement and providing ongoing feedback, including the following:

- **Clearly define—in writing—the performance requirements for staff at each level, and share with all staff.**[213]
- **Regularly assess staff performance**—research shows this leads to greater fidelity to program design, service delivery, and outcomes.[214]
  - **Consider including case reviews and observations** of interactions between probation officers and clients that examine implementation quality (e.g., whether assessments are being conducted and results clearly used to inform case planning, rather than just checking that requisite assessments were completed on time).[215]
- **Provide regular feedback to staff.** This promotes accountability and is associated with improved motivation to change, lower attrition, and better outcomes.[216]
- **Tie performance reviews and raises directly to changes to policy and practice** associated with a research-informed approach to juvenile probation,[217] ensuring this change is explicitly communicated and understood and staff can meet the expectation in the performance review period. Keeping these elements tied to old policies and procedures incentivizes the status quo rather than an embracing of the new approach.
- **Consider the feasibility of tracking key performance metrics for individual officers to facilitate ongoing monitoring and targeted feedback.**[218]

Define, Assess, Support, Evaluate: A Continuous Improvement Process for Staff Competencies

1. Each staff member will have their own continuous improvement process for mastering new knowledge, skills, and abilities. The organization needs structures to support staff throughout this process.
2. **Define.** What knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors will staff need to carry out practices your organization is adopting, use the new tools and data systems, and effectively achieve the outcomes being sought? Define these in job descriptions and competency-expectation documents.
3. **Assess and Support.** Assess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors of current and newly hired staff against the newly defined competencies. Build these through a continuous process of assessment and support. Staff will need training and other supports to learn and refine their new knowledge and skills. They need the opportunity to test out what they are learning, get feedback, and improve. Consider coaching as a strategy to provide ongoing support and problem-solving.
4. **Evaluate.** Evaluate how well staff as a whole are performing. Does your organization need to update the knowledge and skills expected from staff? Do you need to modify your expectations about staff abilities and behaviors? Do you need to alter, update, or enhance the types of supports you are providing?

Partners May Need or Help Provide Support for New Competencies

1. **Need.** Consider whether new expectations of your staff mean you also need new expectations of partners. Is adopting joint expectations of competency plausible? Could you provide joint training on some of the new competencies?
2. **Help and support.** Have other state or local government agencies or community-based programs already adopted a Positive Youth Development approach or other similar research-informed approach? Perhaps they could share tools or resources with your agency in the short or long term.

Questions to Consider: Aligning and Building Staff Competencies

Identifying New Competencies

- What competencies are most critical for staff in your specific change effort?
  - Do these differ at various levels or staff roles? How?
- How will you communicate new competency requirements to staff?

Assessing Current Competencies

- How will you assess current knowledge, skills, and abilities?
  - Is there an existing tool that might work for you?
- How will you communicate the purpose of these assessments to staff?

Building Competencies

- What core competencies must staff develop to align with a research-informed approach?
- How will you design a training and coaching plan to build capacity in these areas?
- Do you need to update job descriptions and hiring criteria to attract candidates with relevant skills and focus attention on new requirements?
- Would it be helpful to retitle the position of probation officer? For example, several jurisdictions across the US refer to staff as "probation counselors" (e.g., King County, Washington; Bexar County, Texas; Clackamas County, Oregon).
- How will you adjust your approach to training new hires to refocus attention on new processes?

Ongoing Review and Feedback

- Do you need to rewrite existing policies for performance review and feedback? If so, which ones?
- How will you implement or modify ongoing assessments to align with a research-informed approach?
- How will you tie reviews, feedback, and incentives with the competencies of a research-informed approach?

8

Aligning Policies and Practices

Organizations rely on policies and procedures to create common expectations and consistent practices. Policies and procedures help leadership codify practices and set the tone for how the work will be done.[219] An agency's formal policies can facilitate or inhibit the development and sustainability of a positive culture that embraces change and is committed to the organization. It is important to consider the size and structure of probation officers' caseloads, workload, and data collection, as well as expectations about data entry.

It is important to clarify important elements, steps, and processes of the new approach through policies and procedures. It is also important to examine old policies and procedures and determine which ones need to be changed. One study identified 22 organizational systems and examined policies that needed to be aligned to make the desired change.[220] A research-informed approach to probation includes many strategies, each of which needs an accompanying set of policies and procedures. We have identified key considerations for policies and procedures related to three core components of a research-informed approach to probation: screening and assessment, case planning, and incentive and response systems. Overarching considerations that apply to all aspects of reform are the following:

- The language of policy and procedure manuals supports the culture shift your agency is trying to make by emphasizing the underlying research for, purposes of, and long term value of the approach and required actions or elements.[221]
- Engaging staff in the process of identifying and making recommendations for policy and procedure changes helps to distribute the work of making the changes while fostering staff buy-in for the process.[222]
- New policies and procedures will need to evolve over time as your agency tests out and refines your approach so it is important to include a procedure for how changes will be made.[223]

Aligning Screening and Assessment Policies and Practices

Developmentally appropriate screening and assessment are the foundations of a research-informed approach to probation. Effective screening and assessment can promote efficient use of resources, identify youth who require additional attention, and identify targets for intervention and services.[226] Although many think of this process as simply selecting and implementing a risk and needs assessment tool, agency leaders will need to develop and implement a screening and assessment system and establish comprehensive policies and procedures related to the entire approach, not just the use of specific tools.[227] Ideally, this system would be established and formalized before training.[228] It is important that organizational policies establish a standardized system for screening and assessment so that procedures are implemented in roughly the same way in every case, with every youth.[229] Additionally, agencies can consider identifying goals for implementing screening and assessment and use those goals to guide policies and procedures.[230] For example, if a goal is to minimize out-of-home placement, organizations might institute guidance for helping probation officers choose the least restrictive option available when using risk information to guide supervision decisions. For a checklist of considerations for implementing screening and assessment tools, see the RFK Children's Action Corps' "Risk Screening Tool and Risk-Needs Assessment Implementation Checklists."

OVERCOMING POTENTIAL STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

We noted above that embracing a research-informed approach to probation will require a more significant shift in some jurisdictions than in others. It is important to note that fully implementing the approach may require some agencies to confront structural barriers—barriers that are often beyond their control—that must be addressed to operationalize core practices. Agencies may need to work with judges and other stakeholders to do the following:

- **Target conditions of probation.** In many jurisdictions, judges use a long standard list of supervision conditions for all youth. Given what we know about how youth process information and struggle to regulate behavior, opting for a shorter, targeted list of "rules" can focus their attention on what really matters and set them up more effectively for success.

- **Authorize officers to impose interim responses for misbehavior.** Similarly, expecting perfect compliance with supervision requirements immediately can put youth at risk of serious consequences—including revocation and out-of-home placement—for even minor transgressions. Authorizing probation officers to impose intermediate responses provides youth opportunities to learn from mistakes and limits harmful consequences.

- **Authorize officers to provide incentives and rewards for compliance.** Research is clear that incentives motivate youth to change their behavior more than sanctions.[224] Setting up a system that allows probation officers to reward youth for following the rules or meeting short-term goals equips them with the most effective tools to help youth make better decisions in the long term.

- **Limit the use of revocation for noncompliance.** Given the harmful impacts of unnecessary out-of-home placement, revocation and confinement should be strictly limited to the most serious cases.[225] Probation officers should have an opportunity to consider a violation's context and to respond according to that information.

To develop and implement an effective screening and assessment system, agency leaders will need to answer the questions that follow.

WHAT RNA TOOL(S) WILL WE USE?

Although not the only component, one main part of establishing policies and procedures surrounding a screening/assessment system is choosing the tool(s) that probation officers will use to assess youth. A critical first step is determining what you need each tool to assess. Risk assessment tools could predict very different things including risk of reoffense, risk of violence, or risk of failure to appear. A clear understanding of what you are trying to predict can help you choose the best tools. These tools might include the following:

- screening tools
- risk assessments
- needs assessments
- strengths assessments
- tools (such as trauma assessments) to assess responsivity factors not captured by most tools

Any tools you choose should have demonstrated validity and interrater reliability (see the boxes that follow).

Agencies should reexamine their chosen tools periodically as the research base grows and the tools improve. Questions to consider in annual reassessments include the following:

- How useful is the tool to the agency and its staff?
- What are the outcomes of using the tool, particularly as they relate to agency goals? (For more information, **see this handbook's "Data" section**.)
- Have any new versions of the tool been released?

WHEN AND HOW WILL PROBATION OFFICERS ADMINISTER RISK-NEEDS-ASSESSMENT TOOLS?

Once an agency chooses its tools, it will want to establish policies for how probation officers should administer them. These policies will likely cover the following questions:

- **When should a tool be administered?** See the Center for State Governments Justice Center's *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* for guidance on using screening and assessment tools at different decision points from the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project and Models for Change Initiative. See Urban's *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-term Change* and *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation* for guidance on when it is appropriate to use risk/need information. In general, although risk information can and should be used to inform decisions about diversion and informal disposition, it should not be considered in formal adjudication decisions, which should be based solely on a case's facts and should not take the youth's likelihood of future delinquent behavior into account.[241]

- **Who should administer each tool?** Screening tools require less (or no) formal training to administer.[242] Research shows that probation officers match services to needs more effectively when they have administered a needs assessment personally (rather than receiving the results secondhand),[243] but some tools will require people with certain qualifications (such as behavioral health care providers) to administer them.

- **How often should the tool be readministered?** It is important to readminister your tool, not only to ensure results are accurate but to emphasize that assessment results are not permanent.[244]

- **What youth will be screened and assessed?** Consider the agency's goals—including those of uniform treatment—as well as implications for data monitoring.[245] Once the decision point for screening has been identified, every youth at that decision point should be screened.[246] Findings from an initial screen would then indicate when a full assessment is needed.

- **How and when should overrides be used?** In general, a certain level of professional discretion should be allowed, but overrides should require approval and be tracked carefully.[247]

Policies standardizing the administration of a tool can help with validity and reliability. For example, some tools come with interview scripts that can help raters administer them consistently. Additionally, organizations can consider including a checklist of steps in an assessment process (processes such as interviews or reviewing records).

HOW WILL INFORMATION GENERATED FROM RNA TOOLS BE USED?

In addition to policies and procedures for administering tools, it is critically important that an agency outline policies and procedures for using the information tools produce. Policies would cover the following:

- **When and to whom results should be communicated.**
  - Consider using a communication template that provides a standardized method for communicating assessment results to external stakeholders.[251]
  - Consider a pre-disposition report template.[252] See, for example, this template for written reports of pre-disposition psychological evaluations.[253]

- **How to use results in case planning.** This would include outlining the purposes certain types of information should be used for (e.g., using needs information to determine service referral) as well as when certain information should never be used (e.g., using needs information to determine placement).[254]

GUARDING AGAINST RACIAL BIAS

It is important to ensure that screening and assessment procedures do not create or exacerbate racial bias. Agencies can guard against that risk by:

- Reviewing criteria included in the tool for potential bias.[248] If the tool is heavily weighted with risk factors based on official records of justice involvement, it can introduce racial bias.[249]

- Monitoring overrides carefully and review criteria.[250]

- Piloting the tools and monitoring for unintended race and gender effects.

RESOURCES FOR SELECTING TOOLS

- "Selecting the Appropriate Risk Assessment Tool" provides a helpful (and brief) framework for selecting the correct assessment tool. The brief walks the reader through the following six key questions for consideration:
  - What type of decision are you making?
  - What population are you assessing?
  - Do you need to predict specific types of outcomes?
  - Do you intend to reduce risk and want to measure progress?
  - How much staff time can you devote to assessment?
  - What are current or potential partners using?
- For more information on different types of screening/assessment tools and some examples, see "*Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*."
- For specific considerations for choosing and implementing a risk assessment tool, see Vincent and coauthors' (2012) *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: Guidebook for Implementation* and Vincent and coauthors' (2018) "Studying Drivers of Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument Implementation in Juvenile Justice."
- For specific considerations for choosing behavioral health screening and assessment tools, see Seigle, Walsh, and Weber's (2014) *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*.

VALIDATION

Vincent and coauthors (2018) offer the following definition of validation:

> *"An instrument is considered validated if sufficient research exists to demonstrate that it accurately reflects criminogenic risks and needs and achieves what it is supposed to—meaning, in this context, that it accurately assesses a youth's likelihood of reoffending and does so regardless of gender or racial/ethnic differences."*

When selecting an assessment tool, agencies must ensure the tool has evidence of validity with the population of youth the agency will be using the tool for. This is particularly important when working girls and youth of color.[231] Some agencies might choose to conduct their own validation studies to ensure the chosen tool correctly predicts what it is designed to assess with the population of youth in their jurisdiction.[232] If an agency does choose to locally validate its tool, it should revalidate regularly and/or when the population of interest changes significantly.[233] In general, agencies can feel comfortable using a tool that has evidence of validity in multiple settings with diverse youth, as multiple studies have found (at least one of those studies was conducted by independent researchers).[234]

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Interrater reliability measures the extent to which people administering the tool for the same case produce consistent scores. When choosing a tool, agencies should consider its reliability and look for research evidence supporting it (particularly from independent sources). However, it is also important that a tool has demonstrated interrater reliability within a specific organization.[235] Organizations can conduct a formal evaluation of reliability or a more informal investigation.[236] For example, booster trainings in which all staff use a tool to score the same case can be used as informal assessments of interrater reliability. Internal interrater reliability metrics should be shared with staff to demonstrate that all users generate similar ratings.[237] Trust in a tool's reliability can make staff more likely to use it.[238] Additionally, interrater reliability can shed light on the quality of an organization's training and oversight.[239] Standardizing policies and procedures for a screening/assessment system (e.g., standardized interview scripts) can increase reliability.[240]

CONSIDER CASELOADS

Each agency will need to decide what the "right" caseload size is for its probation officers It is important to consider whether and how expectations will change regarding the frequency and duration of contacts with youth, as well as any other new job responsibilities; both of these factors will have direct implications for caseload sizes. Some jurisdictions vary caseload sizes based on risk level, assigning smaller caseloads to officers supervising youth at high risk and larger ones for those supervising youth at low risk of reoffending. This ensures that officers with a caseload of high-risk youth can spend more one-on-one time with each client and have sufficient time to manage complex case plans.

It is important to anticipating the need for varying caseload sizes in the short and long terms. The research is full of examples of systems-change efforts that did not work that cite unrealistic caseload sizes as a major implementation problem that prevents staff from learning new skills, damages staff morale (in that they lack the time to implement new activities), and ultimately undermines the whole effort because not adjusting caseload size indicates to staff that leadership either does not understand the kinds of change they are requesting or does not care about the burdens placed on staff. Short- and long-term considerations include the following:

In the short-term, changing from one way of doing things to another requires the following:

- Time to learn new skills. Officers may need smaller caseloads during this time to engage in training and coaching activities.
- Extra time for staff who are not yet proficient in the new activities. Staff need a little more time to consider the new correct steps. Eventually this will be automatic, but is not yet in the short term.

In the longer-term, consider how much time you are asking officers to spend meeting with each youth and conducting additional data collection and data entry:

- Asking supervisors to carry smaller caseloads helps in tracking and determining how much time it may take to serve a typical youth in the new system.
- Think carefully about the following elements of the new system that *may add time per case*:
  - assessments and data entry
  - creating plans together with youth and families (engagement can add more time to ensure families and youth understand what is being asked and come up with plans together rather than imposing them)
  - allowing sufficient time in face-to-face meetings for officers to get to know youth, build a relationship, and implement motivational interviewing techniques
  - providing incentives for doing a good job (in other words, paying attention to youth who are doing well, not just those having trouble)
  - reviewing and updating case plans after each meeting and outlining next steps
- Think carefully about how validated RNA tools may be implemented with other changes (such as the following) that *may decrease time per case or the number of cases overall*:
  - screens that divert more youth at low risk of reoffending
  - assessments that result in fewer or less frequent surveillance activities for youth at low risk of reoffending
  - processes and procedures that result in fewer violations, revocations, or unnecessary escalated surveillance activities
  - automated data systems

Aligning Case Planning Policies and Practices

Although risk and needs assessments provide the foundation for a research-informed approach, effective case planning—in partnership with youth and caregiver(s)—is the core of the approach. Case plans provide a road map for accomplishing probation goals and a framework for monitoring progress, outlining terms and conditions, charting a path for problem-solving, and identifying ways to meet youth's needs through referrals and connection to services.[255] Successful case management also requires matching each youth to the correct supervision level and the services appropriate for addressing their unique criminogenic needs to build on their assets to promote positive development. It is also important to incentivize success through a system of rewards and graduated responses to noncompliance that provide opportunities for youth to experience success quickly and clearly connect positive outcomes with achievement of short-term goals.[256]

To develop and implement an effective case-planning process, agency leaders will need to answer the questions that follow.

WHAT CASE PLAN FORMAT WILL WE USE AND HOW WILL IT BE DEVELOPED?

Developing a case-planning process requires that you carefully consider policies and procedures across several dimensions (see the checklist for developing case plan format and procedures below). Case plan templates[257] (e.g., this case plan template from Florida's Youth Empowered Success (YES) Plan) and Service Referral Matrices[258] can standardize how assessment information translates into case planning. Ensuring that electronic data systems are aligned with new practices is critical: research shows that using workarounds like paper-and-pencil tracking in addition to electronic data entry lowers staff morale and leads to more inconsistencies in implementation.[259] Well-aligned electronic data systems also provide a mechanism for collecting and tracking important information to inform staffing and case management decisions (What is the risk level of youth on probation? How long are cases open? What are the primary causes of technical violations for youth on supervision?). In general, when adding templates for documentation—whether for recording assessment results, communication, or case planning—it is important to ensure that the additional reports do not impose significant additional burdens on probation officers.[260] Additionally, because research suggests encouraging probation officers to use their expertise can increase their buy-in, templates should provide space at the end for officers to enter notes as they see fit.[261] Finally, templates should provide flexibility to incorporate youth and family goals (even if those goals are not identified in formal assessments) to promote family engagement and buy-in to the change process.

HOW OFTEN WILL OFFICERS MEET WITH YOUTH AND HOW WILL THEY USE THAT TIME?

For successful implementation, it is important to develop formal, written policies and/or procedure manuals for staff that clearly state requirements for how often probation officers will meet with youth and how they should structure that time. Although research does not point to clear guidelines regarding the frequency of

CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING CASE PLAN FORMAT AND PROCEDURES

The National Center for Juvenile Justice's *Implementing Effective Case Management Strategies: A Guide for Probation Administrators* also provides the following helpful checklist for developing the format and procedures of case plans:[262]

- decide which cases will have case plans
- select, customize, or design case plan format
- ensure families, educators, and youth are engaged in the case-planning process
- develop policies and procedures for the timeline for completing the plan and completing supervisory reviews of the plan
- provide training and technical assistance for probation officers and supervisors in writing action statements (creating SMART goals and writing effective case plans)
- establish clearly defined parameters, policies, and procedures for documenting progress
- develop policies and procedures regarding when a case plan must be modified or updated and when supervisor approval is required

CASE MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN ACTION

Several publicly available resources provide helpful examples of case management policies and procedures in other jurisdictions. Those resources include the following:

- **Family Case Planning Model.** The Annie E. Casey Foundation published an overview of its Family-Engaged Case Planning Model, which has been implemented in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, Marion County, Indiana, and New York. The brief provides a helpful overview of key concepts, including succinct summaries of relevant research underlying the model and the Stages of Change model,[263] critical for successful long-term behavior change.
- **Example handbook.** Pennsylvania's Case Planning Handbook – YLS/CMI Version (2015) was jointly developed by the state's Council of Juvenile Probation Officers, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, and the Carey Group and defines and operationalizes a framework for effective case plan development and monitoring.
- **Example handbook for youth.** Connecticut Court Support Services Division developed a resource called "Juvenile Probation Handbook: Key to Your Success," which provides youth an overview of probation, explains the case-plan process, answers commonly asked questions, and defines key court terms.

meetings, probation officers will need to spend sufficient time with youth to build relationships, develop a working alliance, help them identify and map concrete steps for meeting goals, collaboratively solve problems, and employ motivational interviewing techniques. The amount of time required could vary given a youth's risk of reoffending and level of need. Formal policies and procedures should be revised or developed to summarize the following:

- how each meeting should be structured (see Harvell and coauthors [2018, 42] for suggestions)
- why meetings should be structured to promote long-term change
- what training and supports are available to support staff
- how probation officers' performance will be measured
- see Urban's *Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-term Change* for guidance on how to structure meetings to promote long-term change

HOW WILL YOUTH BE MATCHED TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT PROMOTE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

It is critically important that agencies outline policies and procedures explaining how results should be used in case plans and to inform service referral. Service mapping and registries can ensure frontline staff have current information on services and supports available in specific communities in each jurisdiction. Research suggests that a lack (or perceived lack) of available services can cause probation officers to overlook certain needs identified in the assessment process. Identifying gaps in services can help address that issue. Service referral matrices[269] can help standardize how assessment information translates into case planning.

Service Mapping

Service mapping can help agencies understand the needs of youth on probation supervision in a given jurisdiction and the services, supports, and opportunities available in that jurisdiction. This can help supervisors identify real gaps in services or supports that their agencies can work with colleagues to address, either by service type, geography, or special population (e.g., girls, youth with developmental disabilities). It can also help an agency take stock of what services and supports exist and clearly document the range of options are available for youth on probation.

Service Provider Registries

Maintaining an up-to-date list of service providers, the programs they offer, and the populations they are appropriate for can ensure frontline staff fully understand the options their clients can access. Communicating directly with service providers to ensure you understand what they offer can help avoid misunderstandings, particularly because websites and other public information sources may be out of date. Expanding these registries to include community supports, opportunities, and eligibility requirements can also ensure frontline staff take a strengths-based approach and include strategies to promote positive youth development.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, person-centered method of eliciting and strengthening youths' motivation for change. It involves (1) using empathy and making youth feel understood, (2) allowing youth to self-identify how they should change problematic behaviors, (3) respecting and understanding youths' reluctance to change, and (4) supporting youths' efforts to change themselves.[264] Furthermore, although there is a perception that motivational interviewing is simply a therapeutic technique, the method's applicability is much broader than that. Techniques of motivational interviewing can be applied universally in various settings, from nursing to juvenile justice. These techniques are not therapeutic interventions, although they aid in the introduction, provision, and conclusion of therapeutic services.

Motivational Interviewing has been shown to be effective for youth with substance abuse treatment needs, and is promising for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Implementation is important when considering these outcomes, however; the effectiveness of MI can vary depending on delivery time and mode.[265] Many juvenile justice agencies across the US have adopted MI practices (e.g., Pennsylvania's "Motivational Interviewing Implementation and Practice Manual"). For more information and guidance on how treatment practitioners can adopt MI, see the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' "Understanding and Using Brief Interventions in the Juvenile Justice System,"[266] "Motivational Interviewing for Probation Officers: Tipping the Balance Toward Change,"[267] and Motivational Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole.[268]

COMMUNITY RESOURCE MAPPING: KNOWING YOUR YOUTH SERVICES LANDSCAPE

The Texas Workforce Commission published a helpful toolkit on resource mapping that provides an overview of how resource mapping can be helpful and how to do it strategically.

The University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development's Community Toolbox also provides a step-by-step guide to identifying community assets and resources.

Finally, the Center for Disease Control provides resources that describe how to assess needs and resources in the community. Its summary also recommends the Community Toolbox guide noted above.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE 2017 SERVICE CONTINUUM ANALYSIS

For the past several years, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has analyzed youth needs, existing services, and service gaps by surveying probation officers throughout the state, reviewing program-level information, and conducting a targeted analysis of the information in their case management system.[270] The 2017 report is the most recent such report currently available and provides a detailed discussion of methodology and findings, including a list of available services and resources, the most common resource and service gaps, and youth populations for whom inadequate services are available, all by Florida county. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice also published an interactive online companion to the report that allows users to explore the availability of specific services by youth characteristics.

See also Maryland's 2013 *Residential and Community-Based Services Gap Analysis report*.

EXAMPLE SERVICE PROVIDER REGISTRIES

Several resources maintain publicly available lists of programs and services offered, including the following:

- the State of Nebraska Judicial Branch (which oversees probation) database of registered service providers
- the Texas Juvenile Justice Department program registry
- the City of Greensboro, North Carolina cross-agency Youth Services Resource Guide

EXAMPLE SERVICE REFERRAL MATRICES

Example service referral matrices include the following:

- Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, service referral matrix (see appendix 3, p. 45)
- Prince William County, Virginia, juvenile justice service matrix

Appendix B of this handbook includes two additional service referral matrices used in Faulkner County, Arkansas (based on the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth [SAVRY] instrument), and Humboldt County, California (based on the Youth Level of Service Inventory), two of the most commonly used risk assessment tools.

Service Referral Matrices

Service referral matrices[271] can help standardize how assessment information translates into case planning. The tools indicate potential service options for youth across multiple dimensions, often including risk of reoffending (low, medium, high) and level of criminogenic needs (low, medium, high). They can provide clear direction about recommended options for specific youth and help ensure equitable treatment for similarly situated youth.

Aligning Response and Incentive Systems

Developing and implementing a graduated response system—something that includes outlining procedures for responding to violations with sanctions and incentivizing positive behavior—is part of implementing a research-informed approach to probation. To develop and implement an effective response and incentive system, agency leaders will need to answer the questions that follow.

HOW SHOULD STAFF IDENTIFY AND APPLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO VIOLATIONS AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOR?

Successful agencies will outline policies and procedures for how and when probation officers would use sanctions and incentives. These would include the following:

- **Guidance on how to determine the severity of a violation and respond appropriately.**[272] When developing this guidance, agencies can use NCJFCJ's Sanctions Chart to ensure responses to violations advance overall supervision goals.

- **Guidance on how determining the level of an accomplishment and responding with an appropriate positive response.**[273] When developing this guidance, agencies can use NCJFCJ's Incentives Chart to ensure incentives are used to advance overall supervision goals. With both sanctions and incentives, it is important to ensure officers have the ability to customize responses for each youth and draw from a range of options within a certain response level. This ensures consistency between similarly situated youth, but allows officers to select responses that are best matched to youth motivations, needs, and responsivity and are more likely to be effective. It is also important to have explicit policies on who can override automatic system responses or recommendations and under what circumstances.

- **Written protocols on how to use structured decisionmaking tools** (see the **section immediately below** for specific examples).[274]

- **Eligibility criteria for including youth in the graduated response system.** Consider at what stage(s) graduated responses should be used, what levels of risk are eligible for participation, and whether there are limits to the use of graduated responses for some youth (such as excluding low-risk youth from the more restrictive sanctions).[275]

- **Expectations for communicating with and explaining the system to youth and families.**[276] This could include expectations for documenting those conversations to acknowledge and verify they occurred.[277]

- **Guidance on how to clarify expectations with youth and set ground rules.**[278]

- **Guidance on documenting what incentives and sanctions will be imposed.**[279]

- **Guidance on when and how probation officers need to seek additional approval for sanctions or incentives (such as from courts or family members) and expectations for documenting approval.** Considering people who need to give approval can increase buy-in and ensure responses are executed as swiftly as possible. Ask stakeholders—including youth, family members, public defenders, and judges—which responses should necessitate additional approval.

WHAT TOOLS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO HELP STAFF RESPOND TO VIOLATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

Agencies can develop and adopt various tools to facilitate the uptake and use of a graduated response system. With input from various sources, agencies can pick which of these tools they want to include in their probation practice and then tailor them to their own graduated response system. Consider compiling all of these tools into a "compliance toolkit" for probation officers using graduated responses.[280] Note that the Center for Children's Law and Policy developed a Graduated Responses Toolkit that provides a wealth of helpful resources. The following are structured decisionmaking tools that could help probation officers apply sanctions and incentives:

- **A list of all responses and incentives that probation officers can use,** with flexibility to tailor incentives to youths' preferences and possibly with notation of which responses and incentives require additional approval. For examples, see the Center for Children's Law and Policy's "Master List of Incentives" and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' "laundry list" of incentives and sanctions.

- **A structured decisionmaking tool to determine the severity of a violation.** These tools can assess the severity of an action along a variety of criteria. For example, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Infraction Determination Guide uses five factors (relationship to underlying offense, victim impact, frequency of violation, compliance with conditions, and community safety) to generate a score that determines the severity of the offense.

- **A graduated sanctions matrix** matches violation behavior with available sanctions. For examples, see this collection of graduated response grids from the Center for Children's Law and Policy Graduated Responses Toolkit.

- **A risk assessment tool,** as risk level can be factored to determine the appropriate response to negative behavior. For more information on selecting a risk assessment tool, see this handbook's "Screening and Assessment" section.

- **An illustrative graduated responses grid** matches positive and negative behavior with corresponding options for incentives or sanctions. For example, see the Reclaiming Futures Illustrative Graduated Response Grid found in CSG's *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* (p. 73).

Some additional tools that could help ensure youth and families comprehend the system their perceptions of fairness include the following:

- **A brochure for parents and youth with an explanation of the graduated response system.** See Maryland's DJS AIM for Successful Community Supervision fact sheet.[281]

- **A brief comprehension assessment to ensure parents and youth understand the graduated response system.**[282]

- **"Interest Inventories," which are self-assessment tools through which youth can identify sanctions and incentives they believe will most effectively motivate good behavior.**[283]

- **"Thinking Reports," which can help youth reflect on what they were thinking and feeling during certain situations.**[284] For more information on thinking reports and an example, see Multnomah County's EPICS Booster – Thinking Reports.

Policies and Procedures May Need to Evolve

1. Initial policies and procedures are developed in anticipation of what will be needed to clarify expectations and guide behaviors of staff (those policies and procedures may be based on the information provided in this guide). It can be helpful to pilot new strategies with a small group within your organization first so they can identify problems and find solutions before those strategies are rolled out to everyone.

2. Giving staff experience rolling out new strategies will reveal whether they find procedures confusing or whether steps in the process actually happen in a slightly different order than designed. It is important to consider staff questions and concerns. Do they need more training to do what the policies and procedures say, or do the policies and procedures need to be adjusted?

3. Rolling out the organization's plans may also reveal some conflicts between old and new policies that you did not identify at the outset.

Partnering on Policies and Procedures Helps the Whole System Change

1. Many parts of a research-informed approach will involve interacting with partner agencies inside and outside the juvenile justice system. Clear and jointly developed expectations for how those interactions take place create a system that works better (with less frustration) for everyone.

2. Consider the timing of initial partner agency involvement to create better buy-in for needed changes in their policies and procedures.

3. Consider creating a structure for regularly revisiting and revising joint policies and procedures.

Questions to Consider: Aligning Policies and Procedures

What policies and procedures need to be revised, rewritten, or created to align with a new approach? Consider policies and procedures related to the following:

- your agency or organization's mission statement
- job descriptions
- criteria for performance appraisals
- hiring procedures and criteria
- caseload standards
- frequency and content of meetings with youth
- screening, assessment, and case planning
- diversion recommendations
- ongoing data collection and analysis

How will you engage with staff to revise policies and procedures?

What policies and procedures do you expect to evolve?

Special Considerations for Aligning Screening and Assessment Policies and Practices

- Do you need to implement or update screening and assessment tools?
- Who will administer each tool?
- What criteria will be established to determine which youth will be screened and assessed?
- How and when should overrides be considered?
- When and to whom will assessment results be communicated?
- How should assessment results be used in case planning?
- How often should each assessment tool be readministered?

Special Considerations for Aligning Case Planning Policies and Practices

- How will case plans be developed and documented?
- How often will officers meet with youth and what will they do at each meeting?
- How will officers match youth to services and supports that promote positive youth development?
- Has your agency assessed service gaps and mapped existing community resources?
- Would a service referral matrix for guiding decisionmaking and individualizing case plans be helpful?

Special Considerations for Aligning Incentive and Response Systems

- How will expectations be communicated to youth and families?
- How will officers determine the severity of a supervision violation and appropriate response options?
- What accomplishments or behaviors will be rewarded, and what options are available to incentivize success?
- How will officers document what incentives and sanctions are given?
- Would tools such as a graduated sanctions or an incentives matrix be helpful?

Aligning Data Systems

Strong data systems* that help staff collect and track data and support data analysis can facilitate implementation and sustain new programs.[285]

Misalignment of data systems is frequently cited in implementation studies as a barrier to successful change. Aligning data systems is one important element of implementation success, but staff must also be trained to appropriately enter, extract, and interpret the data for the system to be effective.

In the context of program administration, data systems refer to systems your organization uses to track information (data) about the youth you are serving, probation requirements for particular youth, actions officers have taken to monitor and reward youth, interactions between officers and youth and families, youth/probation outcomes, and budgets and costs, as well as systems for probation officers' professional development and performance. Your agency may have multiple systems or multiple components within one system. Data systems can be difficult to update because doing so can be expensive, expenses may not be included in regular operating budgets, and a department's data system may be part of an overall agency-wide system not completely under the probation unit's control.

Aligning data systems means making changes within particular information systems that align with new strategies, policies, and procedures. It also means aligning data systems that are being used simultaneously. It is not unusual for agencies to use multiple data systems at the same time, because these systems are frequently created for singular purposes that do not meet all of an agency's needs. For example, Risk-Needs-Responsivity assessments may come as part of a package that includes a data system. In that case, the new strategy and the new system are likely to be aligned. The developer may offer a capability to link to other systems directly for a fee, but agencies may not have the funds to create those links.

Data systems that are not aligned with the new efforts and strategies can become serious impediments to implementation. It is important to plan ahead for potential alignment problems to help staff figure out workarounds. When individual staff members create their own workarounds, the data entered become less meaningful at a management level because each staff member may be using fields in different ways, giving the data different meanings that the managers cannot see and may misinterpret. In addition, data systems that are unaligned can decrease staff morale; staff know the data are meaningless, that it is taking them time to enter data that will not be used, and that they do not have access to data that could help them do their jobs better. Data systems that collect and analyze metrics that are aligned to the goals of a new program, on the other hand, help to:

- **Track adherence to the new program model, policies, and procedures (fidelity);**[286]
- **demonstrate the value of the program**[287] to staff, leaders, and those who authorize budgets and policy changes, such as external funders who may be supporting initial implementation efforts; and
- **establish buy-in from internal and external staff,**[288] because data systems support their efforts to do their jobs more efficiently and to view the results of their efforts.

Aligned data systems are particularly effective when they provide "data dashboards" or easily viewable information at multiple levels. In the past, many data systems were developed to produce "reports" demonstrating the compliance of their users with particular rules or laws. Typically, those reports were sent to people outside the agency to demonstrate compliance.

* By "data systems" we are referencing full knowledge information systems – potentially incorporating multiple databases – that inform data-driven decisionmaking throughout the supervision process.

Although accountability is important and those reports continue to serve a purpose, the stronger data systems are, the easier it is for managers at various levels to view information about staff in their units and for staff to pull their own reports, both of which support continuous quality improvement.

To develop and align existing technology with a research-informed approach, agency leaders will need to answer the questions that follow.

What Performance Metrics Do We Need to Track?

It is important to develop performance metrics that align with the program's goals and will engage stakeholders.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has collaborated with the National Center for Juvenile Justice to develop model measures and analyses that monitor trends and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of juvenile justice systems. The Juvenile Justice Model Data Project suggests metrics should include the following:

- numbers of youth at various stages of the system
- key characteristics of the youth involved (e.g., gender, age, previous trauma, risk level, protective factors)
- situational characteristics of incidents that caused the youth to become system-involved
- pace at with youth move through the system
- youth outcomes (positive or negative changes in the youths' behavior, learning new skills, completing supervision plans)
- extent to which risk level and need are assessed
- youth system experiences (positive and negative, including receiving incentives or experiencing isolation)
- costs of employment of various system stakeholders and costs for serving youth at various points in the system
- longer-term outcomes (positive and negative), such as recidivism or longer-term employment

The project will soon release an interactive database to help agencies collect and using their data, and we encourage readers to check the link above for additional guidance on core metrics.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR ALIGNING DATA SYSTEMS

- Systems should be **formalized during the planning stages** (exploration, installation, and initial implementation) to troubleshoot problems and establish a baseline of data for future comparison.[289] One problem that may emerge for agencies migrating from paper-based systems to electronic systems is that some staff may not know how to type proficiently. Another issue to consider is how, when, and where staff usually take notes. For example, if they are connecting with youth and families outside the office, they may be used to taking handwritten notes; in a paper-based system they would file those notes, but in an electronic system they need to time to type up or enter the notes.

- Systems should be **adaptive** to allow for future problem-solving as insights from the data and feedback from staff and participants is received during the program.[290]

- **Insights from data collection should be shared among agency and program stakeholders** so they can participate in decisionmaking.[291] As such, the data systems should be aligned to facilitate decision-support systems more broadly, and institutionalized by creating organizational structures (such as steering committees with diverse representation) to guide implementation.

- **Consider the current culture and views around data and evidence-based programming.** Stakeholders will accept the need for better data systems and the resulting implementation in varying degrees. Sharing targeted data in digestible formats will help stakeholders begin to understand and buy into a more data-driven culture.[292]

HOW DO WE PROMOTE AND SUPPORT DATA USE FOR CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT?

In addition to a good data system that supports analytic capacity, a synthesis of 50 studies across the public management, nonprofit management, healthcare management, and education management sectors indicates several factors for supporting data use are universal. Derrick-Mills and coauthors' (2014) *Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement: What the Head Start Field Can Learn from Other Disciplines – A Literature Review and Conceptual Framework* offers the following recommendations

- **Leaders** need to show they value good data, get involved in reviewing it, ask questions about it, and promote a culture of data use.
- **Commitment of resources** is necessary to give staff time to enter and use the data. Reviewing and analyzing data takes time, even when data systems display data meaningfully. Staff need to think about what the data are saying in the context of their jobs and what they should do given that insight.
- **Professional development** to help staff use the data systems and interpret the data is important. Like other types of professional development, staff may need repeat training or coaching to help them understand how to use the systems (and the information they provide) appropriately.
- **A culture of collaborative inquiry** supports data use. Staff need opportunities to share and discuss what the data are indicating without fear of repercussions if they flag for leadership areas where the data do not look like they were expected to look. Routinely examining data in meetings and providing coaching sessions for reflecting on data create regular feedback loops for leadership, encourage staff to reflect on their work in new ways, and support a problem-solving environment where solutions to emerging challenges are regularly suggested based on the data.

How Do We Address Privacy Concerns?

Aligning data systems with new goals is an important step in the implementation process, and doing so may require sharing data across offices or organizations. A potential barrier to aligning data systems is ensuring data security, and key stakeholders may not agree to share their data if they do not have assurances that it will be kept secure. It is important to communicate about data security early to ensure legal and other barriers do not inhibit information-sharing. Strategies and tools to anticipate and address this include the following:

- **Develop data-sharing agreements** to facilitate information-sharing.
- **Facilitate cross-sector data-sharing conversations** to better understand concerns and potential barriers.
- **Identify aspects of the data that can be shared** (even if not all information can be shared) and build this into existing data systems.

Can We Use Existing Technology, or Will We Need to Create New Systems?

Data systems should be developed and tested during the planning stages because frequent technical problems can lower staff morale and affect program fidelity and implementation.[293] Strategies for developing effective data technology systems include the following:

- **Use existing data systems** and metrics already collected as a foundation. You can use existing resources to demonstrate the need for change and inform the implementation process.[294]
- **Consider soliciting outside help** (e.g., from university partners) to develop and align the system.[295] Changing data systems can be expensive and aligning them can be complicated. University partners may be willing and able to help at a reduced cost in exchange for access to the data. Entering into carefully designed agreements that account for privacy, security, and other issues may help your organization learn from your data and support better understanding and research in the field more broadly.

CONFIDENTIAL DATA SHARING

Information or data sharing can occur in multiple ways. Data sharing sometimes means one agency sending another records on many youth, or a system of routine sharing of all youth records in a community. Data or information sharing, however, can also occur in case management meetings where information is shared verbally between people representing multiple agencies. Sharing personal information can also occur in more casual conversations. It is important to have policies and procedures for who is allowed to share what kind of information or data, and under what circumstances that would be appropriate.

The Models for Change Information Sharing Tool Kit – Second Edition is a web-based resource designed to help people working with justice-involved youth reflect on ways that data might be shared and ways for appropriately doing so. It uses common questions that people working with youth or parents might have to start a conversation on data sharing.

For an in-depth discussion of considerations around data sharing between juvenile justice and child welfare agencies (including an example agreement), see the following:

- The US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families' "Data Sharing: Courts and Child Welfare."
- Jefferson Parish, Louisiana's, *Developing a Juvenile Justice Information Sharing Agreement: Process and Pitfalls*.

The National Neighborhood Indicators Project provides guidance on data governance and security for integrated data systems for linking individual-level administrative data at the city, county, and state levels, especially linkages across education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and social assistance programs. See its Resource Guide to Data Governance and Security.

In addition, publicly available information-sharing agreements are available from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

- **Automate as much of the data collection as possible.**[296] What is easily incorporated into the new system without replicating input efforts, and what will require additional effort to measure? Does the additional effort produce critical information, and if not, is it worth incorporating into the data system?
- **Develop mechanisms that allow easy access to the data** at the individual and program levels.[297] If staff can view and analyze the data easily, they are more likely to use it to perform their job. Using the data regularly may encourage them to enter it more accurately. Ultimately, the ability to track measurable progress with accurate data may improve morale by helping them see the difference they are making. Supervisors with easy access to data can better review staff performance and provide coaching to help staff improve their actions and data entry.

Data and Data Systems Support Or Impede Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Staff, supervisors, and leadership do their jobs better if they have easy access to data. Individual staff reflecting on their own data can help them make better decisions about their actions. Supervisory and leadership reflection helps determine next steps at a systems level. Is more training or coaching needed? Does the organization need to refine policies and procedures or make clarifications in the manuals describing them?

2. Aligning data systems with new policies and procedures (or establishing short-term uniform workarounds to handle misalignment) is important for maintaining data integrity and usefulness.

3. Staff need the space and time to enter and reflect on the data, professional development supports to interpret and use the data, and to see that leadership cares about learning from the data, including data that may be disappointing.

4. Ignoring data and data systems that do not support access and use can damage staff morale and threaten the success of system changes.

Collecting Data from and with Partners Provides New Perspectives

1. When partners are helping deliver services, their data becomes an important element for understanding whether the system is functioning properly.

2. Data sharing can happen, but it must be designed with care to ensure the data is used properly and privacy is protected.

3. One persistent challenge of the juvenile justice system is the inability to see youth outcomes. This may become possible if stakeholders work together.

Questions to Consider: Aligning Data Systems

- What are you trying to achieve with your change process and how will you know if it has “worked”?

- What metrics are important to collect and track? Consider ones related to the following:
  - probation outcomes (e.g., successful completion, revocation)
  - youth outcomes (including positive youth development)
  - program retention and completion
  - implementation fidelity

- What data system(s) do staff use now to support case planning and tracking?
  - Is each metric identified collected in an existing database? If not, could it be added?

- Would a new data system be required to support data collection and tracking? If yes, is that a feasible option?

- How will you regularly assess progress and challenges through data analysis and review?

- How will you share insights from your findings with staff? With youth and families? With leadership/ funders? With the public?

Implementing Research in Practice: A Call to Action

Over the past several decades we have learned a great deal about what youth supervision strategies most effectively improve public safety and youth outcomes and how to effectively implement research-informed interventions in practice. This handbook synthesizes key findings from research into concrete recommendations for juvenile probation leaders looking to implement evidence-based strategies.

Aligning practices with research holds great promise, and doing so could improve life outcomes for youth, improve public safety, and help stakeholders use limited probation resources more efficiently. Given hundreds of thousands of youth are supervised on juvenile probation each year, shifting toward smarter juvenile probation strategies can have a tremendous impact on justice-involved youth and families across the US.[298]

The research suggests you consider the following as you think about where to start and what steps you can take to aligning research and practice:

1. Assess organizational readiness and potential barriers to change early on.
   - How much will the new intervention or approach change daily practice?
   - Are supervisors and staff likely to embrace the approach?
   - Do you anticipate any barriers to change? If so, which barriers concern you most and how might you overcome them?

2. Establish systems for continuous quality improvement and promoting sustainability from the beginning.
   - What metrics will you track to assess implementation progress and quality?
   - Who will be in charge of analyzing and reporting each metric?
   - How frequently will you assess benchmarks and make necessary adjustments?
   - How will you share insights from your findings with staff? With youth and families? With leadership/funders? With the public?

3. Develop a plan for leading the change effort before it launches.
   - How will you develop a vision that leaders at all levels embrace?
   - How will you demonstrate commitment to the effort in your actions?
   - How will you foster staff buy-in and generate enthusiasm for change?
   - How will you promote collaboration and change throughout the broader justice system and community?

4. Define a clear mission and infuse those principles throughout.
   - How will you incorporate research-informed principles in your mission? These would include the following:
     - strengths-based perspective
     - focus on positive youth development
     - partnership with youth and families
     - attention to procedural fairness
     - individualized and culturally responsive treatment, services, supports, and opportunities
     - community collaboration

5. Coordinate with external partners throughout the change process.
    - How are you building alliances with youth, families, and judges to support reform?
    - What other partners are critical to your change effort?
    - How will you engage these people, organizations, or groups?
    - How will you promote buy-in for the effort with each entity?

6. Align and build staff competencies.
    - How will you assess current staff competencies and alignment with new competencies?
    - How will you support professional development for current staff?
    - How will you recruit and train new hires?
    - How will you provide ongoing review and feedback on performance of new tasks?

7. Align policies and practices.
    - What structural elements must be addressed to support the change effort (e.g., standard conditions of probation or revocation requirements)?
    - How will you revise overarching policies and practices to align with your new mission statement? These could include the following:
        - job descriptions
        - job expectations and performance review criteria
        - hiring procedures
        - caseload standards
        - frequency and structure of meetings with youth
        - screening, assessment, and case planning
        - ongoing data collection and analysis
    - How will you align policies and procedures related to the change (e.g., assessment, case planning, incentives and sanctions)?

8. Align data and decision-support systems.
    - What performance metrics will you need to track to understand whether the change is working?
    - Will you need to acquire or create new technology systems?
    - How will you promote and support data use for continuous quality improvement?

Appendix A

Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Executive Summary

Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Executive Summary

Samantha Harvell, Hanna Love, Elizabeth Pelletier, Chloe Warnberg, and Constance Hull

WHAT DOES THIS FACT SHEET COVER?

A **history and introduction** of the Bridge Project.

An overview of the Bridge Project **methodology**.

A summary of the Bridge Project's **planned products**, including the two-track approach to product development.

An overview of the ***Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation*** report, which includes more information about the Bridge Project and citations for the research summarized here.

Over the past several decades, the knowledge base on how to improve public safety and outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice system has expanded substantially, yet probation officers that work with these young people lack guidance on how this research can inform their work. ***Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change*** offers practical tips for frontline juvenile probation officers to align their practice with research on successful strategies for reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for youth, their families, and the communities in which they live.

THE BRIDGE PROJECT: HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

Few resources exist that provide concrete guidance on how juvenile probation officers, specifically, can integrate lessons from research on adolescent development and effective interventions in their daily practices. To fill this gap, the Urban Institute is working to translate this information into actionable policy and practice recommendations through the **Bridging Research and Practice to Advance Juvenile Justice and Safety project**, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 2015.

In the *first phase* of the Bridge Project, Urban's multidisciplinary researchers focused on identifying areas where research is not fully informing policy and practice. The Urban team systematically identified a need for practical guidance on how juvenile justice practitioners can change daily practices to respond to the unique needs and strengths of youth. The *second phase* of the project focuses on bridging research and practice in youth probation and aims to develop tools to help probation officers and agencies align their practices with research on adolescent development and what works to reduce recidivism and improve youth, agency, and community outcomes.

The juvenile probation strategies report—the first of several Bridge Project probation products—provides concrete strategies for frontline probation staff to align their work with our best knowledge of the unique needs and strengths of youth and successful strategies to promote positive youth development, maximize the efficient use of limited supervision resources, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. Future Bridge Project products are planned in two tracks: **practitioner-oriented, hands-on materials** that summarize key lessons from the report in more accessible formats; and **implementation products** that address key considerations for probation administrators and supervisors interested in establishing a research-informed approach at the agency level.

BRIDGE PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The Bridge Project uses key findings from a large body of multidisciplinary research to develop detailed, practical recommendations for the field. For this report, the Urban team combined findings from research syntheses published by the National Research Council (2013's *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* and 2014's *Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform: The Federal Role)* with targeted, supplemental literature reviews on additional topics relevant to effective practices in youth probation. With input from external research and practice partners, Urban identified five core probation practices necessary to align supervision with research on adolescent development and what works to improve outcomes for youth, and two to four specific practice recommendations within each core practice. For each practice recommendation, Urban summarizes

- **what** research suggests is best practice,
- a brief justification for **why** it is important to effective practice, and
- multiple strategies for **how** it could be operationalized.

OVERVIEW OF *BRIDGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN JUVENILE PROBATION*

Bridging research and practice in juvenile probation draws from what we know about youths' development and effective interventions to identify strategies that motivate short- and long-term behavioral change; promote healthy development; and decrease the likelihood of future misbehavior. Developmentally appropriate screening and assessment are the foundation of the approach, but the core of developmentally appropriate youth probation is based in developing a dynamic case plan—in partnership with youth and caregiver(s)—to guide supervision goals. A research-informed approach empowers probation officers to act as an intervention in and of themselves, using each interaction with youth to review progress toward goals, reassess supervision priorities, and promote long-term behavior change. It also provides an alternative framework for accountability—consistent with the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model—that focuses on taking responsibility for one's behavior, understanding how delinquent behaviors impact others, and making changes to avoid similar choices or actions in the future.

Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation highlights relevant research findings and provides tips for probation officers in five core practice areas:

1. **screening, assessment, and structured decisionmaking**
2. **case planning**
3. **matching services and promoting positive youth development**
4. **structuring supervision to promote long-term behavior change**
5. **incentivizing success and implementing graduated responses**

Within each practice area, the report includes concrete strategies for operationalizing these concepts in practice.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OJJDP Bridge Project page: https://www.ojjdp.gov/bridge-project.html
Urban Institute Bridge Project page: https://www.urban.org/bridgeproject

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Appendix B

Service Referral Matrix Examples

Service referral matrices can help standardize how assessment information translates into case planning. They can provide clear direction about recommended options for specific youth and help ensure equitable treatment for similarly situated youth. Here we highlight matrices used in Faulkner County, Arkansas (based on the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth [SAVRY] instrument), and Humboldt County, California (based on the Youth Level of Service Inventory), two of the most commonly used risk assessment tools.

SERVICE REFERRAL MATRIX: FAULKNER COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Date: 3/1/19

Youth Risk/Need Area

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Disruptive Behavior/ Personality</th><th>Emotional Stability</th><th>Substance Abuse</th><th>Family Circumstances/ Parenting</th><th>Education/ Employment</th><th>Negative Peer Relations</th><th>Attitudes/ Orientation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Low</td><td colspan="7">Note: Low Risk indicates low probability of future violence and/or delinquent behavior.

Enhance protective factors by actively recognizing those that already exist, and actively enhancing those that are nearly present but not quite.

Remember, increased exposure to the juvenile justice system increases risk of low risk juveniles.

Promote parent supervision and support adult role models working with child. Recommend daily activity with parents. NOTE: Only state “report problems to PO” in service plan if needed – we should promote the parents’ self-efficacy and not a reliance on the PO. Encourage parents (rather than PO) to maintain contact with the school.

Random drug screens <u>are not recommended</u> for youth at this level of risk unless substance abuse has been or currently is a problem – it can cause a net-widening effect.

Reduce affiliation with delinquent peers by increasing opportunities with non-delinquent peers in extra-curricular activities or community groups

Promote school/employment success: Conway Cradle Care (teen moms in school), Conway adult education (14+)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Moderate</td><td>Order behavioral specific psychosocial assessment (highly recommended)

Youth / Family Therapy if indicated from assessment

Courage2Change

(M/H)-less intensive

Day Treatment

Civil Rights

Boy’s Boxing Club with Neil Rutman

Girl’s Book Club

Theatre & Social justice with UCA Adam Frank</td><td>Check MAYSI-2 results

Order MH assessment if indicated

Promote family education and development of parent advocacy for treatment services

Youth / Family Therapy if indicated from assessment

Day treatment

Girl’s Book Club

Shakespeare Outreach Program (by Olivia Marotte)</td><td>Check CRAFFT Results

Order SA Assessment only IF indicated

If services needed – consider:

Drug Court referral

Sober Support with Deliver Hope

Day Treatment

Youth substance abuse treatment (outpatient)

Color call-in line</td><td>Active Parenting

Psychological Assessment (Youth / Family Therapy if indicated)

Love and Logic Parenting

Parenting Classes through CSI or Counseling Associates

Haven House (6-18) (for foster kids)

Financial literacy class

Life choices-pregnancy counseling

Girl’s Book Club</td><td>PO to monitor school behavior and attendance with teacher or counselor – coordinate IEP if needed

Volunteer tutoring by UCA

If out of school, refer to employment training, Job Corp., GED or Voc technical education.

Courage2Change (M/H)-less intensive

Day treatment with tutoring

Conway WAGE Training Center (14+)

Conway Cradle Care (teen mothers still in school)

Deliver Hope Day Program

UCA Writing Work Shop</td><td>Courage2Change (M/H)-less intensive

Girls Scouts

Big Brothers, Big Sisters (14 and under)

Mentoring through Juvenile Court volunteers

Mentoring through UCA spring mentoring class

Mentoring through justice circles

Boy’s boxing with Neil Rutman

Girl’s Book Club

Theatre & social justice with UCA Adam Frank

Shakespeare Outreach Program (by Olivia Marotte)

Civil rights</td><td>Public Service Work (individual or with other moderate risk)

Anger Management Classes

Courage2Change

(M/H)-less intensive

Day treatment

Theatre & social justice with UCA Adam Frank

Girl’s Book Club

Boy’s boxing with Neil Rutman

Ethics, Death & Pizza (Moral Dilemmas Class by Chris Campolo Hendrix)

UCA Writing Work Shop

Shakespeare Outreach Program (by Olivia Marotte)</td></tr>
</table>

SERVICE REFERRAL MATRIX: FAULKNER COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Date: 3/1/19

Youth Risk/Need Area

	Disruptive Behavior/ Personality	Emotional Stability	Substance Abuse	Family Circumstances/ Parenting	Education/ Employment	Negative Peer Relations	Attitudes/ Orientation
High	Order behavioral specific psychosocial assessment (highly recommended) Youth / Family Therapy if indicated from assessment Courage2Change (M/H)-less intensive Day treatment Civil rights Boy's boxing Club with Neil Rutman Girl's Book Club Theatre & Social justice with UCA Adam Frank Therapeutic Foster Care Ethics, Death & Pizza (Moral Dilemmas Class by Chris Campolo Hendrix) Justice circles HEAT	Check MAYSI-2 results Order MH assessment if indicated Youth /family therapy if indicated from assessment Day Treatment Girl's Book Club Therapeutic Foster Care Possible referral for an assessment to determine if inpatient or long-term residential treatment needed HEAT	Check CRAFFT Results Order SA Assessment If services needed – consider: **Drug court referral** Sober Support with Deliver Hope Youth Substance Abuse Treatment (Intensive outpatient); provider will decide whether inpatient treatment is needed based on their assessment Day Treatment Color Call-in Line	Active parenting Psychological assessment (youth / family therapy if indicated) Love and Logic Parenting Parenting Classes through CSI or Counseling Associates Haven House (6-18); (for foster kids) Financial literacy class Life choices-pregnancy counseling Therapeutic foster care Parent empowerment If services are ineffective, consider an evaluation assessing the level of violence, abuse, neglect that might necessitate out of home placement. Referrals to child welfare system may be necessary.	PO to monitor school behavior and attendance with teacher or counselor Volunteer tutoring by UCA If out of school, refer to employment training, Job Corp., GED or voc technical education. Day Treatment with CSI or Deliver Hope (please specify; based on days and amount of days needed) Conway Cradle Care (teen mothers still in school) UCA Writing Work Shop Work force services Financial literacy class	Big Brothers, Big Sisters (14 and under) Mentoring through Juvenile Court volunteers Volunteer JPO Mentoring through justice circles Boy's boxing with Neil Rutman Girl's Book Club Theatre & Social justice with UCA Adam Frank Civil rights	Order behavioral specific psychosocial assessment Public service work (with only other high risk youth) Anger management classes Courage2Change (M/H)-less intensive Day Treatment Theatre & Social justice with UCA Adam Frank Girl's Book Club Boy's Boxing with Neil Rutman Ethics, Death & Pizza (Moral Dilemmas Class by Chris Campolo Hendrix) UCA Writing Work Shop HEAT

Services Available for Enhancing Protective Factors

Boy's Boxing Program, Girl Scouts, Girl's Book Club, UCA Goal Setting/Mentoring Program, Sewing Class, Writing Workshop, Tutoring by UCA

Mental Health Services (Responsivity)

Mental health service providers that will provide service for Medicaid beneficiaries who have a mental health diagnosis

Community Services Inc., Counseling Associates Inc.- Community Mental Health Center and Medicaid Outpatient Mental Health Service Provider, United Methodist Behavioral Hospital-Medicaid Outpatient Mental Health Service Provider, The Pointe Outpatient-Medicaid Outpatient Mental Health Service Provider. Conway Behavioral Health

SERVICE REFERRAL MATRIX: HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

YLS/CMI Need Areas

	Family Circumstances/ Parenting	Education/ Employment	Peer Relations	Substance Abuse	Leisure/ Recreation	Personality/ Behavior	Attitudes/ Orientation
Low Enhance Prot. Factors by recognizing strengths and building upon them.	Promote parent supervision and support adult role models/ mentors working with child. Recommend daily activity with parent(s) and encourage parental engagement. Active Parenting-Parent Coaching	Parent is to maintain contact with teachers & school OR with employment Recommend parent(s) sign onto Infinite Campus-Referral to After-School Program/ Tutoring Promote this as a protective factor by enrolling in some college/adult learning courses if graduated	Reduce affiliation with delinquent peers by increasing opportunities with non-delinquent peers. Parental monitoring-youth and peers supervised via home-based activities, scheduled pick-up/drop off, etc. (limit unsupervised time) Referral to Boys and Girls Club Nevada Outdoor School Faith-based youth group	Promote parent supervision and support adult role models/ mentors working with child. Recommend prosocial activity (sports teams, community programs) Have youth inform guardian of SA/ use, with who, when, and how to increase parent's ability to supervise. Group counseling and/or courses contra-indicated	Recommend prosocial activity (sports teams, community programs, scouts) to enhance protective factors Referrals to Boys and Girls Club Nevada Outdoor School Youth Sports Recommended one family activity per week of their choice	Promote parent supervision and support adult role models/mentors working with child. Refer for parenting skills training/ support if needed. Recommend / Require prosocial activity (sports teams, church groups, community programs)	Promote parent supervision and support adult role models/mentors working with child. Promote other protective factors.
Moderate	- Active parenting, co-parenting at FSC, Strengthening Families, Parent Coaching at FSC Referral to Family Counseling	CCP with school official present, JOIN, Vic Rehab, GBC, JobConnect, School treatment plan. Refer to PEP Peer Tutoring Saturday school Skills to Pay the Bills Encourage parents to monitor school attendance and grades through Infinite Campus	Project MAGIC, SEEK groups, Boys and Girls Club, Young Lyfe, REDY Mentoring Healthy Living Boys Council Voices MAGIC Girls Circle	SUD Evaluation-Outpatient, group therapy, family engagement, Celebrating families, randomized testing schedule (color) Alternatives Living Responsibly Moving Forward Relapse Prevention Group Peer Recovery Specialist Referral to Self Help Group	Community service/volunteer opportunities, family dinners or activities, Community sport teams Healthy Recovery Peer Group Healthy Living Daily Goals Boys and Girls Club REDY Mentoring Referral	MH or Psych eval if recommended, Interventions within school (after-school activities, study skills classes), MH therapy Changing Offending Behavior START Project Aware Centering	CBT Therapy DBT Therapy Parental involvement in therapeutic interventions Changing Offending Behavior START Project Aware

SERVICE REFERRAL MATRIX: HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

YLS/CMI Need Areas

	Family Circumstances/ Parenting	Education/ Employment	Peer Relations	Substance Abuse	Leisure/ Recreation	Personality/ Behavior	Attitudes/ Orientation
High	Celebrating Families, One-on-One Parenting MDFT DCFS Referral Family Counseling Transitional Housing	IEP meeting if deemed necessary, 504 Medical, Tutoring after-school, Saturday school. Monitoring Infinite Campus attendance and grades- OPTIONS Adult Education HI Set	Recover Out Loud with Peer Support Specialist, individuals with peer support, REDY mentor	SUD Updated Assessment Frequent Drug testing color, IOP or higher, relapse prevention, family involvement, habilitative services (i.e. life skills courses) Opportunity Court, Relapse Prevention Group, Peer Recovery Specialist, Inpatient treatment, placement	REDY mentor, Boys and Girls Club, Recover Out Loud.	Psych evaluation (follow all recs from that eval), MDFT, Higher level of placement County Youth Camp State commitment. Inpatient Cooccurring Facility Transitional Housing DCFS/WIN Referral START Forward Thinking	Therapy (EMDR), Forward Thinking START Inpatient Cooccurring Facility County Youth Camp State Correctional Care Transitional Housing

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