

Category Three Case Studies

Hennepin County, Minnesota

Through collaborative effort to redesign out-of-home placement used by both the Department of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation (DOCCR) and Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD), Hennepin County leadership discovered the lack of a coordinate and coherent approach to addressing the risks and needs of youth involved in the delinquency and dependency systems. Identified issues included the breakdown of information sharing across departments, case management coordination, and lessened awareness of the role of each department and how to meaningfully work together. There was a lack of a coordinated effort to share appropriate and effective community-based and out-of-placement resources for dually-involved youth. There was a lack of cross-system casework training and policies, as well as a lack of a joint-assessment or joint case management requirements. Resources were not shared between the two departments, and staff was typically limited to resources available only in their department. These breakdowns have resulted in duplication of services, poor matching of interventions with the youth's/families' risks and needs, poor family engagement, multiple placements, and unacceptable outcomes for some of our youth with more complex needs.

Based on these findings, Hennepin County sought to:

- Develop rules, policies, and procedures for increased data sharing among the parties that are working Hennepin County Juvenile Services;
- Develop a memorandum of understanding to allow data sharing for crossover youth, i.e., youth involved in both the dependency and delinquency systems;
- Support the memorandum of understanding with court orders that allow for specific types of data to be shared;
- Develop an integrated data sharing plan;
- Utilize integrated data from both systems for performance measurement; and
- Assure the institutionalization of best practices and collaboration with regard to crossover youth.

The following stakeholders were assembled to accomplish this critical work:

- Hennepin County Administration
- Hennepin County Juvenile Court
- Hennepin County Attorney's Office
- Hennepin County Public Defender's Office
- Hennepin County Human Service & Public Health Department
- Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation
- Community advocates and service providers
- Educational leaders and system staff

The multi-agency collaborative has produced the following:

- **Information/Data Sharing Agreements:** Hennepin County's participation in the national Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) at Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform prompted the need for an interagency agreement. Specifically, the county needed an agreement between Hennepin County's DOCCR, HSPHD, the Fourth Judicial District Court, and the Hennepin County Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices. A Memorandum of Understanding and a Memorandum of Agreement were drafted and signed to promote increased cooperation, coordination, and integration at the administrative and service delivery levels for the benefit of children and families under juvenile protection and delinquency jurisdiction in Hennepin County. The Juvenile Presiding Judge also signed a standing court order in 2012 to allow participating parties in the CYPM to share information and data to accomplish the goals set forth by the practice model and Memorandum of Understanding.
- **Data Collection, Management, and Performance Measurement:** Hennepin Juvenile Services has established a structure for data collection, identification of aggregate data reports, and developed dissemination and the procedures for use of reports. Each month, Corporate Compliance and Quality Assurance (CCQA) and DOCCR review all cases open at least one day in the reporting month. The review examines CYPM case information found in the Social Service Information System (SSIS), the Electronic Case File (ECF), the Minnesota Department of Community Corrections database (MAIn), and the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS), and compares it to program criteria documented in the Hennepin County Crossover Youth Practice Model Guide.
- **Identification:** Hennepin County Juvenile Services addressed the need to improve the timely identification of youth at the point of crossing over. The County Attorney's Office-Juvenile Prosecution Division is the first point of contact for identifying youth who meet Hennepin County's crossover youth criteria. When the County Attorney Office reviews a case for charging, the reviewing attorney or their designee will check HSPHD's SSIS database to determine whether the youth has an open case in human services and whether that youth meets the Crossover Youth criteria.
- **Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Meeting:** Hennepin County Juvenile Services developed a Multidisciplinary Team meeting to ensure effective intersystem coordination and promote collaboration between agencies. A Multidisciplinary Team encompassing the Crossover Youth Navigator (whose role includes initially identifying the crossover youth and then facilitating the MDT meeting), representatives from the County Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, the youth's case manager(s) and probation officers, representative from the Guardian Ad Litem's Office, and other juvenile stakeholders depicts the beginning of collaboration between the two departments. The meetings are MDT meetings are held within 7 to 14 days of identification and provide an opportunity to review the crossover youth's strengths, as well as identify gaps and/or barriers in preventing the youth from receiving appropriate and effective services. At the

conclusion of the meeting, suggestions are offered to guide the preparation for the upcoming meeting with the youth and parents/caregivers. The MDT develops next steps, identifies appropriate supervision and community resources, and implements timely and appropriate placement/service plans that promote community safety and serve the child's best interest.

Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is a large state with a de-centralized juvenile justice system. There are 67 counties, 60 judicial districts, and hundreds of public and private service providers and programs for delinquent youth. Each county probation department contracts individually with service providers to serve their youth, but there has not been a standardized approach to evaluate services and improve outcomes.

In 2010, Pennsylvania launched the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JSES). JSES incorporates evidence-based practices at every stage of the juvenile justice process and is designed to enhance the state juvenile justice system in achieving its Balanced and Restorative Justice mission. In late 2011, Pennsylvania was chosen, with Berks County as a pilot site, to participate in the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform's Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP). One of the factors that influenced Pennsylvania in making the decision to participate in the JJSIP was the opportunity to learn more about the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP).

SPEP meshed well with the JSES because it is a validated and data-driven rating system for probation and providers. Designed by Dr. Mark Lipsey of Vanderbilt University, SPEP assesses a service based on evidence-based factors that determine the service's likelihood of reducing recidivism. This information is incorporated into a Performance Improvement Plan that suggests modifications with the goal of reducing recidivism rates for future program participants.

The SPEP Advisory Group was formed to oversee SPEP's expansion statewide. As a first step, the SPEP pilot was expanded into four additional counties. The SPEP Advisory Group deliberately included membership from state agencies, county probation staff, providers, and staff from the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter). The EPISCenter, funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, was charged with developing state-specific SPEP materials, trainings, and processes for stakeholders.

Today, more than 30 provider agencies in Pennsylvania delivering more than 60 services have voluntarily participated in SPEP. The process includes provider interviews and data review from the statewide Juvenile Case Management System database, which has been used to identify statewide utilization rates of delinquency service providers, and which served to inform decisions about where to focus SPEP activities. Probation and providers jointly contribute to the SPEP assessment process and work with SPEP consultants to create and implement Performance Improvement Plans. Cooperation throughout this process has deepened probation's understanding of provider programs and services. As a result, probation can more easily refer "the right kids, to the right programs, for the right amount of time."

SPEP findings have been promising to date. More than 70% of services evaluated have achieved an initial SPEP score of more than 50, which implies that those services are likely contributing to reducing recidivism. Two thirds of services are operating with a score that indicates a medium or high quality of service delivery. SPEP consultants also have noted more effective information sharing among providers and probation staff. For instance, providers and probation are now more prone to use and share the results of youth assessments, such as the Youth Level of Service (YLS) needs assessment. In sum, SPEP has become much more than a rating tool. It has helped create partnerships that will improve both probation referrals and provider service delivery.