TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE
Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings
Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections, Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

Juvenile Detention and Mentoring
THE REFERRAL STAGE

Written by:
Michael A. Jones
Pamela A. Clark
Ronald J. Quiros
Juvenile Detention and Mentoring

Juvenile Detention is considered to be a secure residential facility that provides for the temporary and safe custody of juveniles whose alleged conduct is subject to court jurisdiction and who require a restricted environment for their own and the community’s protection while awaiting a hearing, pending disposition, awaiting a placement or pending a return to a previous placement. In most cases, a youth’s time in a Juvenile Detention setting is short-term (72 hours or less). Juvenile Detention may be publicly or privately funded and operated. The continuum of services provided to youth in Juvenile Detention is determined by the jurisdiction/private entity operating the facility and, at a minimum, should include services that address immediate and/or acute needs in the educational, mental, physical, emotional and social development of juveniles.

Mentoring Program Description
Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

Geographic and Demographic Characteristics
Juvenile Detention facilities may be located in communities large and small, rural and urban across the country. Because not all communities have a Juvenile Detention center, facilities often serve a regional area. Juvenile Detention facilities may be co-ed or gender specific. The minimum and maximum ages of youth served in Juvenile Detention are jurisdiction specific and guided by statute. Some facilities may choose to serve an age group that is even more narrow than that allowed by statute. Typical minimum and maximum ages are 10 and 18 years respectively. Offenses that youth in detention are charged with range from runaway, a status offense, to murder.
Possible Challenges Facing Youth Involved with Juvenile Detention

The overarching goal of mentoring youth in the juvenile justice system is to build and strengthen youth assets. When dealing with youth in this setting, one should be cognizant of potential challenges:

Individual
- Conduct disorders (authority conflict/rebellious/stubborn/disruptive/antisocial)
- General delinquency involvement
- Mental health issues (including substance abuse)
- Unmet medical and dental needs

Family
- Mental disorders/antisocial parents
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Family poverty/low family socioeconomic status
- Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)
- Family stress
- Parent criminality
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring, and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

School
- Poor school attendance
- Poor school performance; academic failure
- Learning disorders
What is the difference between a detention center and a correctional center?
In the process of conducting initial contacts for potential site visits, project staff learned that there was some confusion among mentoring programs about the difference between Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Corrections’ settings.

- Detention is used primarily for juveniles who are awaiting action of the court or transfer to a Juvenile Corrections facility.
- The average length of stay in detention is usually less than 21 days with the majority of youth staying 72 hours or less.
- Some detention centers have specialized programs so that juveniles may stay as long as six months, serving a sentence that the judge has imposed.
- Juvenile Corrections centers house juveniles who have been committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice by a judge. These youth have been found to have committed a felony or multiple misdemeanors.
- Unless committed by the judge on a determinate commitment, juveniles cannot remain in a Juvenile Corrections center longer than 36 months on an indeterminate commitment.

Who refers youth in Juvenile Detention to mentoring?
- For detention settings where a mentoring program is embedded and is part of the facility’s programmatic offerings, the process for making referrals for mentoring during incarceration was the juvenile court by virtue of the judge ordering the youth to detention.
- Without an embedded program, there was little evidence of a formalized mentoring process for Juvenile Detention settings given the short-term nature of incarceration. In some instances, Juvenile Detention line staff workers informally fit the role of mentor/role model to a particular young person during their brief confinement.

What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Juvenile Detention setting?
- An embedded mentoring program functions completely within the Juvenile Detention facility. Mentoring staff have office space in the facility, participate in staff meetings, interact with youth in programmatic settings and are viewed as important members of the team by line staff, as well as facility leadership.
- The embedded mentoring programs provided daily group sessions that lasted between one and two hours per session for all detained youth.
- Curricula were used that focus on character/leadership, education/career, health/life skills, the arts and sports/fitness/recreation.
- Professionally trained mentoring staff delivered the one-to-one, group and team-based mentoring services during and post-detention.
How are strong relationships formed between Juvenile Detention settings and mentoring programs?

- In the case of the identified detention sites, staff with the local mentoring program approached leadership at the detention facility about operating an embedded mentoring program in the facility.
- The primary mentoring program staff should have a solid understanding of the juvenile justice system in general, the function of Juvenile Detention and the type of at-risk/high-risk youth served in this setting in order to lend credibility to their discussions with facility leadership about implementing a program.
- Mentoring program staff should be included in training provided by the detention facility related to working with youth in a secure setting.

Are non-embedded mentoring programs successful in working with Juvenile Detention youth?

- A non-embedded mentoring program suffers from the lack of regular presence and interaction among mentoring staff and facility staff and leadership, as well as with the detained youth. These programs are shown not to be as valued or understood by detention staff and youth as those programs that are embedded.

Were youth in Juvenile Detention willing to participate in mentoring programs?

- In settings where there was no requirement to attend the mentor programming, it was rare that a youth would choose not to attend. In settings where mentoring activities were incorporated into the facility’s programming, youth were expected to participate.
- The greatest challenge for participation is the short-term nature of detention. At best, a mentoring program may only make brief contact with many youth during their confinement. In these cases, the mentoring staff should be prepared to explain the value of the program, encourage the youth to participate post-release and gather the appropriate contact information for the youth, as well as for their parent(s)/caregiver(s).
- In all instances, continued participation in the mentoring program post-incarceration was voluntary and at the mentoring program’s discretion.

What are the post-release mentoring considerations for Juvenile Detention youth?

- Participation in the community-based mentoring program is for as long as the youth is eligible and chooses to participate in mentoring.
- Youth in the juvenile justice system tend to be transient, so maintaining regular frequent contact is important and may be challenging.
- In states that operate regionalized Juvenile Detention centers, a youth may be many miles from their home community, complicating the development and maintenance of a mentoring relationship in the youth’s home area.
- One-to-one mentoring post-release should typically be one hour each week and should take place at various safe locations in the community.
- The one-to-one mentoring match commitment should be for at least one year.
- For youth adjudicated from short-term detention to a long-term sentence in a Juvenile Corrections facility, consideration might be given to waiting for the offender to be moved to the corrections setting before implementing mentoring services.

Are there any statutory requirements related to mentoring?

- Related to the mentoring program, there were no statutory requirements to be met either during or post-incarceration.
WHAT’S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

Embedded Mentoring Program

- Mentoring program activities were embedded in the program schedule at the detention facility. As a result, all youth incarcerated there were “referred” to the mentoring program. This situation ensured that all youth had the opportunity to be exposed to mentoring activities.

- Since the mentoring program was embedded in the detention facility, there was an opportunity for mentoring staff to build relationships with detained youth during their incarceration. This relationship building during incarceration helped the youth:
  - Begin to make a connection with the mentoring program and its staff before their release from detention.
  - Be more likely to have an interest in being referred to and participating in post-incarceration mentoring.

- Offering mentoring programming inside the detention facility provided youth with an opportunity to understand what services they might receive from the mentoring program after their release from detention.

- Having the mentoring program embedded at the Juvenile Detention facility allowed the mentoring program staff to build relationships and trust with juvenile justice staff that contributed to the level of information available to the mentoring program about the issues and needs of detained youth before their release from detention.

Post-Release

Mentoring staff contacting detained youth within 24 hours of their release from detention supported the maintenance of an ongoing connection with these youth post-release.
The short-term nature of the Juvenile Detention setting provides some challenging barriers in implementing a formal mentoring program. Anecdotally, the findings suggested that mentoring in these settings is often provided by individuals, typically from a faith-based organization, visiting the Juvenile Detention facility on a semi-regular basis rather than by staff from a community- or evidence-based mentoring program.

**Challenge #1:** Due to confidentiality requirements, mentoring program staff often found it difficult to access information required by the mentoring program, including parent contact information, until after the youth’s discharge from detention.

**Action Step** – An expectation should be set by mentoring staff for youth indicating an interest in participating in post-incarceration mentoring services to provide contact information for his/her parent(s)/caregiver(s) as soon as possible.

**Challenge #2:** Despite the relationship building that takes place while youth are incarcerated, after release from detention the young person could change his/her mind about participating in the post-incarceration mentoring program.

**Action Step** – An investment by mentoring program staff in building relationships with the youth’s parent(s)/caregiver(s), both during and after the youth’s incarceration, may serve to provide a support system for encouraging the youth’s ongoing participation in mentoring.

**Challenge #3:** Changes in the young person’s placement can negatively affect the ability of the mentoring program to continue to serve these youth post-incarceration.

**Action Step** – There is likely little that may be done to anticipate or mitigate the impact of this situation.

**Challenge #4:** Poor parent/child relationships at times kept parent(s) from supporting the young person’s participation in mentoring programming post-incarceration.

**Action Step #4** – Mentoring programming for youth involved in the juvenile justice system may be most effective when accompanied by parenting education and support services. These services may be offered as either part of the mentoring program or as a referral for service.
TERMs and Definitions

Adjudicated — a court ruling of guilt or innocence.

At-Risk and High-Risk Youth — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

Caretaker or Physical Custodian — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

Dual Adjudicatory — a Delinquency Court designation for an abused, neglected or dependent youth who is also a delinquent youth and vice versa.

Embedded Program — a program that is housed inside the juvenile justice setting either by being developed by the juvenile justice setting or by being implemented by an outside mentoring program.

Individual Service Plan (ISP) — a focused plan for addressing any number of issues that a youth may have. Generally, a similar term is commonly used in public education to aid youth with learning difficulties. While the same may be true in Juvenile Corrections, the ISP may include issues for staff to consider when working with the youth in any program.

Juvenile — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

Legal Guardian — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

Needs Assessment — one tool in the Structured Decision-Making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

Petition — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

Pre-Adjudication — the period between arrest and a court ruling on guilt or innocence.

Wrap-Around Services — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report

OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary

Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition

Memorandums of Understanding Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles: Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth

MENTOR’s Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition

MENTOR’s Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section

For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:

MENTOR at http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/;

Global Youth Justice at http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html; and

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Boys and Girls Club of the Tennessee Valley
Knoxville, TN
http://ww.bgctnv.org

Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo
Buffalo, NY
http://www.bgcbuffalo.org

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England
Portland, ME
http://www.goodwillinne.org

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring
High Risk Youth Resources
http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html

National Partnership for Juvenile Services – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources
http://www.npjs.org/

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
http://www.mentoring.org/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Mentoring Resources
http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring
http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx

Administration for Children, Youth and Families,
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes Regarding Juveniles
This project was supported by Grant #2010-JU-FX-0118 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.