

THE LINK

CONNECTING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CHILD WELFARE

Community Interventions

Reducing Overrepresentation in Iowa's Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems

By Brad Richardson, PhD, DMC Resource Center

The Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC) Resource Center at the University of Iowa has linked efforts to eliminate disparities in the juvenile justice system with efforts to reduce overrepresentation in child welfare. Recent efforts have shown that a combination of system change and direct practice can produce measurable results. We have found staff in all systems need better training and awareness of cultural competency and awareness of disproportionality and the relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile justice involvement.

We have also found that when one approach to a family, child, or system does not succeed we must explore alternatives that draw on individual and community strength to affect change. Doing more of the same will not result in better outcomes. We should also recognize that incarcerating children and youth, often for offenses that do not threaten public safety, exposes them to negative influences that may far exceed the temporary convenience of confinement.

Amnesty International has uncovered reports from around the United States suggesting a shortage of services for children that might keep them out of the juvenile justice system altogether, particularly mental health services. For example, a recent report by Louisiana state officials acknowledged that secure facilities held many children who had been "discarded" from the mental health, educational, child welfare, and other systems of care. Social workers in a number of states have even instructed desperate parents to have their children arrested to get services because community health services are so scarce.

In Dallas, a mental health professional reported in 1998: "I had a 15-year-old girl who was hallucinating

and psychotic, and a staff member from mental health and mental retardation agreed she needed hospitalization. But then she said they were over budget for the year, so couldn't I find an offense that would get her arrested, like an assault?"

Observing the processing of juveniles supports Amnesty's contention that "juvenile justice systems should as a matter of course assess children to determine whether they should receive specialized care rather than be placed in a detention or correctional facility," and this should be done before holding them in a detention facility. Research reported by CWLA (especially John Tuell's article, "Promoting a Coordinated and Integrated Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System" and Michelle Green's article from the November/ December 2002 *Children's Voice*, "Minorities as Majority: Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice") and others (e.g., Dennette Derezotes's "Examining Child Maltreatment and the Impact of Race in Receipt of Child Welfare Services in the United States" and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act [JJDP] reauthorization of 2002,) have documented the relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

My niece's arrival this May marked a time of great excitement and change in my family. My mother flew in from halfway around the world, I took a week off work, and we all moved into my sister's house. Suddenly, life centered around meeting the needs of a seven-pound baby girl.

Around the same time, I saw an episode of *Extreme Makeover Home Edition*, the popular television show in which a deserving family's home is renovated. The family for this particular episode was a police officer with three boys who had recently lost their mom to cancer. After spending a week vacationing in the mountains, the family returned to a new house and a community that had raised more than \$150,000 for them.

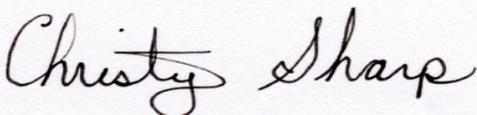
As I watched the show, I began to wonder: What if instead of a widowed police officer, the family was a single, drug-addicted mom with three young children? To support her addiction, she engaged in prostitution, and her children had been removed from her home. Perhaps she completed a 30-day treatment program and was working to have her children return home. If this young woman applied to *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* would her family be selected? Would the community hold a fundraiser to help get her on her feet? Would her mother and sister be there to help ease the transition?

The agencies and organizations we work for are responsible for making tough decisions about removing children from their homes. When that decision is made, those children become our children—our nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. How often do we sit up at night wondering what we can do to help a child we love become a successful, productive man or woman? As the systems that enter the lives of children, answering that question is part of our responsibility.

Just as my sister could not do it alone, we cannot do it alone. Each system, organization, and person needs the help, support, and expertise of others. We need to work together across systems to help children and families become successful and productive. This means doing the best we can with the little bit we have. It is about coming together, leveraging available financing, sharing information and services, planning together, doing assessments and screenings, and providing the appropriate treatment to help families move forward.

I hope that as you go through your day, you think of your daughters, sons, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, children in foster care, probationers, kids in detention, or group home residents and have great expectations for them. When I think of my niece, I know in my heart she will be successful, productive, and happy. For me to expect anything less would be unacceptable.

Sincerely,



Christy Sharp
Director, Juvenile Justice

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The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. We are committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth, and their families, and protecting every child from harm.

A list of staff in CWLA service areas is available online at www.cwla.org/whowhat/serviceareas.asp.

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justice involvement. Yet Derezotes (2002) reports that although the three National Incidence Studies "compared Caucasian, African American, and other children [on maltreatment occurrence by race and ethnicity]...all three studies concluded that there are no differences in the incidence of child abuse and neglect by any racial group."

Since the data do not support overrepresentation as a result of the incidence of maltreatment, Derezotes concludes that child welfare agencies are largely responsible for the vastly disproportionate rates of African American involvement in the child welfare system. She points out that eight states have been granted Title IV-E waivers to build on the strengths of extended families and cultural traditions to turn kinship arrangements into positive advantage to achieve permanency. Although Iowa is not among the eight states, the work under way is directly in line with the more strengths-based and family-centered approach to community-based interventions.

The research on differential offending versus institutional bias and on maltreatment incidence parallel one another. We frequently encounter questions about the cause of overrepresentation or more precisely, who's to blame?

There may be some social psychological research that would help answer the question. Research I con-

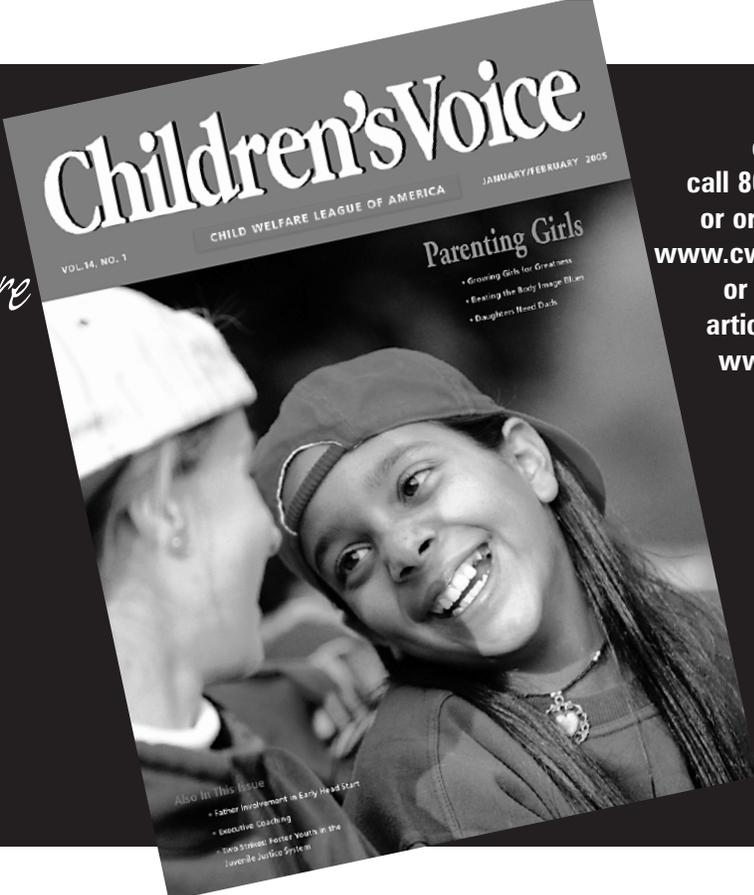
ducted many years ago by found that situations that appeared to be clear, negative, and with serious consequences were associated with personal attributions rather than attributions of responsibility to the situation or circumstances (Richardson, 1978, *How We Judge Others: The Attribution of Responsibility*). Other research on attribution theory also examined "locus of control" and its association with blaming victims. Those who link reward with their own behavior tend to attribute responsibility to actors in other situations, whereas "externals" tend to believe in a "difficult world, an unjust world, a world governed by luck, or that the world is politically unresponsive." Cultural and perspective differences exist between the way minority families and professionals involved in the system view the world.

What we have found in studying juvenile detention data collected over five years in Polk County, Iowa, is that although offense severity is the strongest predictor of the decision to detain or not to detain, race accounts for a small but significant portion of the variation unmitigated by any other variable. For a decade, minority youth have represented one-third of the youth detained in Iowa while making up less than 10% of the youth population.

Iowa reflects the national trend in child welfare as well where children of color represent nearly half of

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For more on meeting the special needs of girls in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, see the January-February 2005 issue of Children's Voice magazine.



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the foster care population compared with 20% of the nation's children (NDAS, 2005). In Iowa, children of color comprise 12% of the population and more than 20% of those in the child welfare system (Child Welfare Outcomes Report, 2001).

Derezotes (2002) reported that although African American children represent 15% of the child population, they represent 31% of the founded reports and 45% of out-of-home placements. She reports, however, that National Incidence Studies found "no differences in the incidence of child abuse and neglect by any racial group." Although data suggest they are not at greater risk for abuse or neglect, as noted above, minority children are clearly overrepresented in the child welfare system. From administrative data we also know that children of color experience a higher number of placements and are less likely to be reunified with their birthparents. According to a Casey fact sheet referenced by the Children's Bureau, "even when children and families of color have the same characteristics as their Caucasian counterparts, research reveals differential treatment at virtually all points of the child welfare decision-making process including reporting, investigation, child placement, service provision, and permanency decision-making."

Much like the child welfare system, the juvenile justice system is finding ways to grapple with the overrepresentation of youth in its system. This issue has received Congressional attention through passage of JJDPA. The act requires states that receive formula grants to "address juvenile delinquency prevention efforts and system improvement efforts designed to reduce, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas, the disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups, who come into contact with the juvenile justice system." Further, each state is required to report their progress. States that do not comply could be penalized by losing up to 20% of their formula grant allocation for the year.

Iowa's Efforts to Reduce Disparities

For more than a decade, minorities have been overrepresented in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in Iowa. JJDPA also recognized that preventing suspensions and expulsions is also linked to reduced involvement in the juvenile justice system. The Des Moines Public Schools recently requested that the DMC Resource Center work with them to address overrepresentation in suspensions and what is referred to as the "achievement gap" as a part of their "Plan for Progress."

Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack (D) has repeatedly expressed support for the statewide effort to help communities address the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. "A third of Iowa youth held in juvenile detention facilities are minority... [yet] they make up only nine percent of the state's youth population. This is an issue that we need to address" (*Des Moines Register*, 2003 and 2004). The state numbers, however, have remained disproportionately high. A brief visit on any given day to many of the detention facilities will give you the impression that about half of confined youth are minority. This is especially the case in Sioux City (Woodbury County) and Des Moines (Polk County), two sites where the University of Iowa's DMC Resource Center, in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Human Services and the Iowa Department of Human Rights, has been working with multiple initiatives and community groups.

Reducing Overrepresentation in the Child Welfare System

The DMC Resource Center is involved in efforts to reduce minority overrepresentation in juvenile justice, child welfare, and improve educational outcomes. Originally founded in 2002 at the University of Iowa School of Social Work's National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice, the DMC Resource Center was intended to serve statewide and community efforts to reduce overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. Working with the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), the DMC Resource Center is also working to reduce overrepresentation in the child welfare system through the Minority Youth and Families Initiative (MYFI). This initiative has pilot projects in Des Moines and Sioux City.

In Des Moines, the MYFI project is implemented by PACE Juvenile Justice Center, a local inner-city non-profit. For the MYFI project, PACE provides case management and family support services to African American households referred by DHS where there has been a maltreatment report to DHS and where other children in the home may be at risk. Using embedded workers (i.e., workers who live in the community in which they are working) as case workers who are culturally sensitive and who employ a strengths-based, family-centered approach, the project has been able to prevent reabuse, prevent abuse of other children in the families, and prevent the need for foster or group-home care. To date, no subsequent maltreatment reports have been filed on any of the 14 families who have participated in the program since January 2005.

In Sioux City, where there is significant overrepresentation of Native American children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, MYFI is responsible for the creation of a Specialized Native American Unit within DHS. The unit's goals include earlier identification of relatives as placement options, recruitment and retention of Native foster homes, and use of family team meetings. Since January 2005, 10 workers have accepted assignment to the unit, and approximately 30 families with 120 children have been served, with eight diverted to tribal jurisdiction and another 15 families participating in preventive services. To date, no known maltreatment reports have been recorded among these families.

Reducing Overrepresentation in the Juvenile Justice System

The DMC Resource Center has targeted efforts in counties where there is overrepresentation in secure confinement and assists local efforts to address related issues. The center provides technical assistance to county-based coalitions that have identified overrepresentation as a priority. The DMC Resource Center has helped by analyzing local data, providing training, and keeping the process moving forward by attending meetings, providing information, research, evaluation, education, and helping to obtain needed expertise for communities.

To heighten awareness statewide, each year an annual DMC Resource Center Conference brings together social workers, attorneys, police, educators, and other community members for two days to discuss the issue and possible solutions. Last year, the conference drew 300 participants from 14 states.

Although overrepresentation continues to exist in the state, some areas have shown improvement. For example, analysis of relative rates for Muscatine County youth in secure confinement show a reduction from 200% overrepresentation in the years 1998–2002 to a relative rate index of 1 in 2004, meaning that overrepresentation does not currently exist in the county. In Des Moines, while the percentage that minority youth comprise in secure confinement has remained largely unchanged, the relative increase in the minority youth population has been greater, suggesting that in real terms a slight reduction in overrepresentation has occurred.

Reducing Overrepresentation in School Suspensions

Not only do disparities exist in terms of minority overrepresentation in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, but also in school suspensions. Data

collected in the Des Moines area at the county detention center show that youth who appeared at the detention center and were detained had an average of nearly 11 school suspensions. According to the Des Moines Public School's (DMPS, 2005) Plan for progress, the "students who are most at-risk for suspension are African American, male, have academic difficulties, and receive special education services. These characteristics are often included in the profile of students who drop out of school" and those who are disproportionately confined in secure detention.

In 2005, DMPS requested training in strengths-based, culturally competent group facilitation for social workers and psychologists. The DMC Resource Center provided the training and worked with DMPS to process the information obtained through a series of focus groups conducted with African American and Latino students who had been suspended, and a parallel set of focus groups with their parents. Some of the findings from the focus groups included:

- Despite acknowledging that suspension was necessary under certain circumstances, parents and students thought suspension "does not work."
- A perceived connection exists between race and suspension, and race is believed to play a role in whether a student is suspended.
- Parents recognize they play an important part in setting expectations for student behavior.
- Power and respect between school staff and students is an issue that need attention at all schools.
- Students see a need for more diversity and cultural competence training among personnel.
- Students would like more mentors and teachers who "understand and support them."
- School personnel who conducted the focus groups came away with an appreciation of the depth of student understanding of the issues being discussed.

Strength-Based Community Approaches

The efforts by the DMC Resource Center to help communities reduce overrepresentation require ongoing attention to the details of the community-based interventions. It is not an easy model to fully implement because it requires continual reflection and revision.

We want to identify areas of focus and strategies that will effectively reduce overrepresentation. We strive to collect data on outcomes and the extent of suc-

We Are Soldiers

By Elvia Rodriguez

What are we? Soldiers! What is our mission? To obtain knowledge self-respect and wisdom! What is our weapon? Our weapon is knowledge! Who is our enemy? Myself without knowledge! What is our creed? I will bind all negative actions and thoughts; I will accept change and achieve positive goals for my future!

Those words begin and end each session of the Gang/Crime Diversion Task Force (G/CDTF) in Racine, Wisconsin, a program that works to address juvenile crime, recidivism, status offenses, and gang-related activity. The program serves male and female participants ages 8–17, with offenses ranging from petty theft to attempted homicide.

Sound challenging? It is.

G/CDTF was formed in 1996 as an arm of the Racine Police Department and implemented by officers Jerry Freeman and Todd Dyess. Racine, midway between Chicago and Milwaukee, is a well-known corridor of gang migration and drug trafficking. The two officers believed that working in conjunction with ex-offenders who wanted to give back to the community would save children by bringing them out of gangs and away from criminal behaviors.

In 2000, several of the involved officers were leaving the department, the police chief was retiring, and many were concerned about the program's future. The current G/CDTF program director, Maurice Horton, was working as a truancy abatement coordinator for Safe Haven of Racine Inc., which provides crisis intervention services, and had been a volunteer for G/CDTF. He played a key role in creating a collaboration between the Racine Police Department and Safe Haven of Racine to keep the program going.

Horton is a nationally recognized speaker on the myths, trends, and history of gangs and youth. He is also an ex-felon who once lived the life he is trying to save youth from emulating. Horton now oversees four full-time and two part-time staff members, and his open and engaging style filters down to his diverse staff.

Like Horton, all G/CDTF staff started as volunteers. When some limited funding became available, staff were paid for part of the year. To this day, staff salaries are extraordinarily modest. Even so, they

work with the most difficult situations our community has to offer, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find an agency and a staff more dedicated to its program and clients.

Services are provided directly to prevent and intervene in the early onset of delinquency and address discipline problems, poor academic performance, truancy, school transitions, delinquent siblings or peers, and rejection by peers. By coordinated referral, the program also addresses hyperactivity, child maltreatment, parental substance abuse, family disruption, parental criminality, poor academic performance, truancy, school transitions, poverty, community disorganization, and exposure to violence.

Program facilitators record participant data, including attendance, participation, and completion of homework assignments. They also administer pre- and post-evaluations of thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors to assess participants' progress towards their objectives. G/CDTF programming seeks to help youth identify negative thinking and teach corrective thought patterns; identify the effects of criminal actions on others, make amends when possible, and increase the capacity for expressing empathy and compassion; improve cognitive functions that decrease criminal behavior; and identify patterns for crime-free living.

Indicators of success include the ability of the youth to name healthy behaviors, list positive attributes of a healthy relationship, define respect and trust, and describe how they are demonstrated in a relationship. Additionally, students are expected to be able to identify the indicators of an abusive partner and the essential steps of a safety plan to implement when confronted with violence.

Daily afterschool structured group sessions are held over 12 weeks in three City of Racine Community Oriented Policing houses. Individual mentoring, family contacts, court liaison services, and school visits are often included. Weekly attendance reports are sent to case managers to show compliance with court orders. Case managers at the Racine County Human Services Department receive an evaluation of court-ordered participants at the end of the 12 weeks to assist in evaluation. Home visits, school visits, and family sessions are used as needed. The G/CDTF serves nearly 100 youth annually. Most are from low-income, single parent families.

The involvement of youth in the program design and implementation is necessary for the program to work. The youth board comprises participating students who have shown consistency in attendance,

improvement in decisionmaking skills, and leadership within the group sessions. Youth move from freshman through senior status on the board. The youth board members are responsible for helping to facilitate the class and holding other class members responsible for their actions by imposing disciplinary actions appropriate to an offense (i.e., the loss of a recreation day).

Class begins with community time, which allows each participant to share daily emotions or experiences with other youth in a structured environment and to gain insight or feedback from other youth. The facilitator then begins the lesson.

The G/CDTF uses former gang members, drug dealers, peers, and local professionals to provide a balanced intervention. Individual donors and community businesses provide rewards and incentives.

The program strives to reduce gang membership, graffiti, violence, crime, and recidivism, and increase pro-social behaviors through sessions focused on group accountability, individual mentoring, and coordinated linkages that involve frequent contact with juvenile justice, social service, educational, family, and peer systems.

Youth are primarily referred by the Racine County Human Services Department, but some come through referrals from satisfied parents. If space is available and the youth meets the criteria for intake then every interested youth is served. The only clients the program will not serve, due to safety concerns, are youth with severe or chronic mental illness; suicidal intentions, gestures, or acts; severe or chronic alcohol or other drug addiction; or youth accused of sex crimes against children. The youth and parent then must go through an orientation process to determine if the program is able to help and if the parent is able to make a strong alliance with the program to help the youth change.

In many cases clients are yelling, fighting, or crying when they enter the program. Some teens may need to vent anger or release hurt before they are ready to discuss problems in a calm and rational manner, depending upon their circumstances.

The intake process is as brief and painless as possible—keeping in mind that the situation may not be routine for the family involved. Parents usually need to talk and receive reassurance, since parents and guardians often feel a sense of failure and shame, while the young people feel angry and hurt.

Discharge, or graduation, occurs when a youth has successfully completed the 12-week program, or upon mutual agreement of the youth, caregiver(s), and staff. Attainment of goals, completion of services, the youth's expressed desire to withdraw, identification of appropriate alternative living situations, and necessary disciplinary action are some of the criteria for discharge. At the time of discharge, the family is also involved in assessing progress and making plans for aftercare.

Another condition for graduating from the 12-week cycle is compliance with the program. If the parent and topic facilitators are not satisfied with the youth's progress, the youth stays for another 12 weeks. This is usually enough for the youth to progress and implement change.

Admittedly, most youth are not excited about coming to the program, but once it is time for graduation most are melancholy and thankful for the experience, with a new mindset on how to approach different situations as they arise.

Elvia Rodriguez is the G/CDTF topic facilitator. She can be reached at erodriguezwx@yahoo.com. Information for this article was also contributed by Jim Huycke, LCSW, Executive Director, SAFE Haven of Racine.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

Back from their summer recess, the Senate Judiciary Committee will first take up the nomination of John Roberts to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, but will then move to legislation, possibly including the Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act (S. 155).

The House passed the deeply flawed Gang Deterrence and Community Protection Act (HR 1279) in May, and the Senate bill is similar in many respects to the House bill. Both bills emphasize incarceration and punishment at the expense of prevention and early intervention.

Neither bill gives adequate attention or funding to proven, research-based solutions that prevent and reduce crime and its underlying causes. Instead, when it comes to youthful offenders, both bills emphasize get-tough approaches such as prosecuting youth as adults, which has been proven to actually increase the level of crime.

CWLA is working with the Senate to do more in its bill to support and expand more effective strategies. At the very least, successful prevention and early intervention strategies should get equal attention as law enforcement.

successful community collaboration among those identified as critical to the intervention process. Data are necessary to build future understanding of the

- effectiveness of implementing alternative services;
- effect on access;
- importance of including culturally competent practice (e.g., extended family and other supports such as faith-based);
- extent of enhanced ability to build on community strengths and resources; and
- extent to which achievement of goals is sustained.

Outcome evaluation provides historical and baseline documentation in addition to assessing the results of current activities. Where a report is available, it can be referenced in the future for quality assurance purposes or as a tool to compare current outcomes with the previous status of similar measures. Documenting intervention activities, outcome evaluation data, and analyses aid in ensuring the effectiveness of local intervention strategies.

Implementation of a strengths-based community intervention draws heavily from family development and matrix model literature, and work and is essentially a systems-change model. Similar to the way in which practice innovations target direct practice results, community practice targets systemic results (c.f., Kohombian, 2002; Weisberg, 2002 in "The Prevention Report").

It is a process and a values base that requires a support focus designed to enhance strengths at every level. Direct service workers are asked to maximize input from clients and build on self-identified strengths and mutually agreed upon goals.

Administration must also enhance effectiveness by maximizing worker input. The model is intended to promote independence and stability at all levels and, as Connie Burgess described in her workshop at the 2005 Joining Forces Conference, to challenge the difference between boundaries and barriers.

Outcomes using a strengths-based approach are usually achieved faster and the results are more sustainable, making it more cost-effective (c.f. Nelson et al., 1996; Richardson, et al. 1995). We must assume that all families and communities have strengths, and change is supported by identifying and building on those strengths.

Creating a resilient, healthy family or community is not working toward an ideal set of strengths. What

strengthens one family or community may not strengthen another. For communities, the effective use of evaluation information parallels the therapeutic process with individuals where strengths in domain areas are identified (e.g., Richardson, Spears and Theisen, 2003). At the community level, we have found the use of social network analysis methods to be particularly effective for identifying and measuring strengths in community collaborative activities. The use of data through research and evaluation efforts provide an information base upon which we can identify strengths and promote informed decisionmaking (Richardson, Spears & Theisen, 2003). Community intervention occurs best in the same manner.

We also need to involve families more at the front end. Those working in the system need to develop positive relationships with parents in working with youth who need help, and those in administration need to facilitate and require change in the system to better serve families. Although poverty and racism may contribute to overrepresentation, we do not have a clear understanding of why the disparity exists, and why in particular it exists for African American youth. We do know that the overreliance on suspension, confinement, and out-of-home placement are not effective and in the end produce disparity. We need to find better alternatives that are informed by evidence-based practices characterized as strengths-based, solution-focused, and family-centered.

Our approach involves a combination of both art and science (Richardson and Thomas, 2005). The art involves doing your homework, paying attention to sensitive issues, establishing credibility within the community, engaging detractors, seeking continual feedback, and separating the message from the messenger. The science involves identifying issues that are known to directly affect disproportionality rather than those with a more general relationship (e.g., poverty) and maintaining the focus with ongoing attention to measurable results. The science also involves gaining judicial support, finding and supporting a functional leader, and engaging communities in a way that encourages involvement from everyone, because it is in everyone's best interest to address disproportionality.

See references for this article on page 10.

JUVENILE JUSTICE NEWS AND RESOURCES

Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System

Short, J., and Sharp, C. (2005). Washington DC: CWLA.

Describes the prevalent phenomenon of disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in the juvenile justice system. It delineates the extent of racial disparity among juvenile offenders in the arrest, referral, preadjudication detention, adjudication, and postdisposition confinement stages and examines how statutory and policy shifts have exacerbated DMC. Examples of such shifts include transfer statutes for juveniles to be prosecuted in adult criminal courts, the war on drugs, detention of immigrant youth, and antigang laws.

In addition, the monograph reviews the status of federal legislation pertaining to juvenile DMC, casual factors, and lessons from successful state and local models, and includes recommendations for further research, policy, advocacy, and programmatic initiatives. These strategies emphasize ongoing data collection and analysis; mounting public education campaigns; and the use of community-based prevention, early intervention, and alternative-detention programs as effective solutions for eradicating DMC in the juvenile justice systems. Available at www.cwla.org/programs/juvenilejustice/jjpubs.htm.

Highlights of the 2002–2003 National Youth Gang Surveys

Egley Jr., A. (2005). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Summarizes findings from the National Youth Gang Surveys for 2002 and 2003, including data on the number of gangs, gang members, and gang related homicides in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Overall, the findings provide evidence that gangs, gang members, and gang-related homicides are concentrated in larger cities. Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200501.pdf.

The HSUDH Report: Mother's Serious Mental Illness and Substance Use Among Youths

(2005). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Drawing on data gathered by SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, this report examines the occurrence of serious mental illness and substance abuse among mothers and their children in 2002 and 2003. According to the report, youth living with a mother who had serious mental illness had an increased risk of alcohol or illicit drug use in the past month, compared with youth living with a mother who did not have serious mental illness. Available at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k5/motherSMI/motherSMI.cfm>.

Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases

(2005). Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

This benchbook of best practices was developed by a committee of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, juvenile justice practitioners, and other professionals representing key stakeholders in the juvenile justice system, through the support of OJJDP.

To set forth the essential elements of effective practice in juvenile delinquency cases, the publication identifies 16 key principles for courts, as well as recommended best practices throughout the juvenile delinquency court process—from determining whether a case should enter the system, to whether youths should remain under juvenile court jurisdiction or be transferred to criminal court, and to post-disposition review of the reentry process when youths return to the community. The document will help the nation's current juvenile justice systems plan for improvement and change. Available at www.ncjfcj.org/content/blogcategory/346/411.

The Mathematics of Risk Classification: Changing Data into Valid Instruments for Juvenile Court

Gottenfredson, D., and Snyder, H. (2005). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP.

This 44-page bulletin can help juvenile courts develop and use risk classification instruments. It is intended to help courts classify youth into risk groups as an aid to program assignments. The report compares statistical methods for classifying risk and offers recommendations for selecting classification procedures. It is an important resource for juvenile courts in their efforts to provide appropriate interventions, treatment, and punishment to offenders. Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/209158.pdf.

Planning Community-Based Facilities for Violent Juvenile Offenders as Part of a System of Graduated Sanctions

Zavlek, S. (2005). *Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP.*

Presents basic information relevant to planning smaller, community-based or regional facilities to provide secure confinement for serious, violent, and/or chronic juvenile offenders. The bulletin discusses the advantages of these facilities and outlines a process for developing them within a comprehensive juvenile justice system master plan. It also describes three sample programs and lists related resources.

Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojdp/209326.pdf.

Violence by Gang Members, 1993-2003

Harrell, E. (2005). *Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics*

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