“In the 1970’s, the message issued by the research community concerning the use of prevention and treatment programs for juveniles was that "nothing works." This unfortunate and, as it turned out, erroneous conclusion, together with increasing serious juvenile delinquency, fueled confinement of larger numbers of juveniles throughout the 1980's… Now we find that treatment programs for juveniles do work – and were working all the while.”

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. To define what constitutes success for juvenile justice interventions
2. To distinguish between failing and successful program models
3. To identify the underlying principles behind successful models
4. To recognize the importance of formally evaluated programs and organic community-level approaches
Adolescence is a stage of development where young people frequently test limits, push boundaries, and generally behave in ways that adults find annoying, aggravating, and frustrating. On rare occasions, adolescents have committed horrific crimes that shock society. What behaviors should be prosecuted as crimes? What behaviors should be dealt with by family and community members?
Group Exercise

You will be given a card with a behavior. Walk over to the large graph on the wall and plot the behavior.
“Nothing Works”

• The failure of community corrections to change delinquent behavior has led many practitioners to conclude that “nothing works with these kids…”

• Martinsen (1974) in The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment: A Survey of Treatment Evaluation Studies reported that:
  ▪ programs he studied had “no appreciable effect - positive or negative - on rates of recidivism of convicted offenders”
  ▪ “rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have no appreciable effect on recidivism.”
3.3 A. Juvenile Justice Interventions: Success or Failure

- Short-term success or failure in juvenile justice interventions is typically measured by whether youth are re-arrested or violate court-imposed conditions while under supervision.

- Longer-term success or failure in juvenile justice interventions is typically measured by the program’s impact on youth recidivism.
What is Recidivism?

Recidivism: “a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior”

(Merriam-Webster)

In the juvenile justice system, recidivism can mean:

- Re-Arrest
- Re-Conviction
- Return to Prison
- Violation of Conditions of Release
Too often, young people’s failure in juvenile justice intervention programs and subsequent incarceration is due to non-compliance with court-imposed conditions that have relatively little to do with public safety.
Where in your jurisdiction do you see young people being detained or placed for non-compliance with court conditions (truancy, curfew violations, failure to attend services, etc.) as opposed to public safety reasons?

What data can you find that backs this up?

Which decision makers can do something about this?

What intervention could you put in place that might work?
CCFY’s preferred definition of “success” for community-driven alternative to incarceration programs is:

1. Is the program able to keep young people from re-offending in ways that harm the community?

2. Does the program have the ability to move young people along the path of healthy development towards positive adulthood?
Evidence-Based Interventions

While it was once thought, “nothing works” with juvenile offenders; there is now clear evidence that many approaches have a measurable effect on reducing recidivism among youth.
In small groups, review the program model your group has been assigned, discussing whether or not you believe this model has shown to be effective in reducing recidivism. Choose a presenter to report back to the large group on your conclusions.

- Model Discussed:

- Is it Effective in Reducing Recidivism?  
  Yes  No

- Why or why not?
What Works?

- Correctional Placement
- Individual Therapy
- Multi-Systemic Therapy
- Boot Camps
- Restorative Justice
- Youth Court
- Scared Straight
- Therapeutic Placement
- BronxConnect
- Gun Court
Correc/onal Placement

10-Year Recidivism for OCFS Youth (New York)

- Re-Arrested: Girls 81, Boys 89
- Convicted: Girls 63, Boys 83
- Felony Re-Arrests: Girls 68, Boys 85
- Adult Prison/Jail: Girls 32, Boys 71

Girls vs. Boys
Multi Systemic Therapy (MST)

4-Year Recidivism Outcomes

- Treatment Refusers: 87.5%
- IT Dropouts: 71.4%
- IT Completers: 71.4%
- MST Dropouts: 46.6%
- MST Completers: 22.1%

Bourdin et al. 1995
BOOT CAMPS

Juvenile Jails vs. Boot Camps

- Re-Arrest:
  - Juvenile Jails: 66%
  - Boot Camps: 73%

- Re-Convictions:
  - Juvenile Jails: 60%
  - Boot Camps: 66%
Restorative Justice

Juvenile Recidivism Rate

- **Mediation**: 19%
- **Comparison Group (no mediation)**: 28%
Youth Court

Youth who recidivated 6 months after release

Youth Court: 28%
Comparison: 9%
A randomized study of 946 juveniles found that those who went through *Scared Straight* were 68% more likely to re-offend than those who did not.
### Therapeutic Placement

**% of Youth Sentenced to Adult Prison within Three Years of Release**

- Arizona: 23.4%
- Indiana: 20.8%
- Maryland: 26%
- Missouri: 8.5%

**% of Youth Recommitted to Juvenile Custody or Sentenced to Adult Prison for a New Offense with 2 years of Release**

- New Jersey: 36.7%
- Missouri: 14.5%
3.4 B. BronxConnect

![Bar chart for BronxConnect](image)

- 1 Year: 18%
- 3 Years: 44%
- 5 Years: 48%

OCFS
- 1 Year: 36%
- 3 Years: 46%
- 5 Years: 54%

No Services
- 1 Year: 58%
- 3 Years: 77%
- 5 Years: 81%
The researcher noted: “the majority of those convicted of new crimes were for misdemeanor charges, including ‘trespassing,’ ‘disorderly conduct’, and possession of small amounts of marijuana. This may be more of an indication of the conditions of their neighborhood environments than a continued ‘criminal mindset.’”

The researcher also recommended that resources be allocated “to create a three or five-year ‘mentoring follow-up initiative’ as an added component to the original program.”
Gun Court

Recidivism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Supervision (Gun Court)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Intensive Supervision</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence-Based Programs

There are now multiple programs that have been scientifically evaluated to demonstrate whether those programs have a measurable effect on reducing youth offending (recidivism). A program is considered *evidence-based* when:

1. The program has been evaluated by an *independent* research entity, such as a university.

2. The research demonstration includes a group that received services (*experimental* group) and a similarly situated group (*control* group) that did *not* receive services.

3. The group that received services showed statistically significant *improvement* compared to the control group.
Should jurisdictions require that juvenile justice interventions use only evidence-based program models?
Advantages and Drawbacks of Evidence-Based Programs

There are very clear advantages to using formally evaluated evidence-based programs, but there are some drawbacks as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have been demonstrated to work!</td>
<td>There are plenty of other programs that work just as well or better, but have not yet been clinically evaluated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes away the excuse that failure is the fault of the kids, the parents, the community, etc. Also known as “provider accountability” programs.</td>
<td>May discriminate against community-based organizations that do not (yet) have the resources to (a) hire an independent researcher or (b) afford to implement evidence-based models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide very clear “how-to” guidelines for implementation and service delivery.</td>
<td>Can be overly rigid in following a prescribed service model when, inhibiting creativity and flexibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advantages and Drawbacks of Evidence-Based Programs

Organizations should not feel pressured to only implement evidence-based programs. Other options include:

- Promising Practices (see the OJJDP Model Programs Guide http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/)
- Keeping rigorous data on your own program, including long-term recidivism analysis.
- Partnering with a university for independent evaluation of your own approach.
The Principles of Effective Intervention

Studies of multiple programs, or meta-analysis shows that more important than the specific program model are the following key principles that cut across effective interventions:

1. **The RISK Principle**: the length and intensity of the services should be matched to the risk level of the offender.

2. **The NEED Principle**: interventions should target the specific needs that directly contribute to continued offending.
The Principles of Effective Intervention

- **RESPONSIVITY Principle**: the style of service delivery must be matched to the individual young person; staff must work with each young person in a flexible, individualized, customized manner.

- **The INTEGRITY Principle**: the services must be implemented by competent staff who follow the principles that made the intervention successful originally.
CCFY promotes approaches that build on the natural strength of the community and the young person.

1. Organic Relationships

Lambert and Bartley (2002) found that participants who successfully completed alternative programs cited the following factors as most important for their behavioral change:
3.5 D.

New Directions for Juvenile Justice Interventions

Participant Self Assessment of Factors Contributing to Behavioral Change

- Rapport with staff 30%
- Treatment Model 15%
- Self-improvement Techniques 15%
- Extra Therapeutic Factors 40%
New Directions for Juvenile Justice Interventions

- The “extra-therapeutic factors” were primarily:

  Naturally Occurring Relationships of Support in the Community
2. Strength-Based Youth Development

- Evaluations of asset-based approaches show that strengthening protective factors has a greater impact on preventing risky behavior than focusing on risks and needs.
- Several leading juvenile justice theorists advocate for strengths-based interventions.
- CCFY has completed the first formal evaluation of its strength-based diversion program, *South Bronx Community Connections*, and shows a statistically significant reduction in recidivism.
3. South Bronx Community Connections (SBCC)

- An independent evaluation conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice found that youth who participated South Bronx Community Connections program were less likely to be re-arrested than a comparison group of similarly situated Bronx youth. 
- Furthermore, SBCC was successful in keeping youth engaged well beyond their mandated time in the program.
KEY OUTCOMES TO DATE

- The SBCC intervention achieved a statistically significant reduction in re-arrest. Only 16.1% of participants were re-arrested within a year of program participation.

- SBCC participants were one third less likely to be arrested than the comparison group who did not receive CCFY’s intervention.

Comparison Group (n=3,092)

Treatment Group (n=62)
South Bronx Community Connections

Length of Engagement for Treatment Group
N=62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg. LOS</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MED</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Stay (days)</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Avg. Mandate | | | 60 |

- HIGH:
  - Avg. LOS: 361 days
  - Avg. Mandate: 60 days

- MED:
  - Avg. LOS: 236 days

- LOW:
  - Avg. LOS: 119 days

N=62
CCFY’s Best Practices

CCFY puts forth the following as “best practices” for faith and neighborhood organizations working with youth in the justice system:

- Low Youth to Staff Ratio
- Comprehensive Intake Assessment & Individualized Strategy Plans
- Intensive Case Planning
- Strong Referral Network
- Culturally Competent Staff & Volunteers
- Asset-based Youth Development Approach
- Impeccable Documentation
3.6 B. Grassroots Neighborhood Organizations

Grassroots Neighborhood Organizations are important because:

- They are there after 6 PM.

- They can provide support for the entire family.

- They can provide supportive relationships from adolescence through adulthood.

- They have a vested interest in promoting community safety.
Faith-based organizations are important for the following concrete reasons:

1. They are there!
2. They have pre-existing networks of pro-social adults with relationship capital.
3. They are often individuals who come from the same background/experience as the youth and have experienced transformation.
4. In severely economically depressed and disenfranchised neighborhoods, they are sometimes the only self-governing and economically self-sufficient institutions.
Why Faith-Based Organizations?

Faith-based organizations are important for the following intangible reasons:

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Love

“And now these three things remain: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:)