



CSU UNITY

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

February, 2017

Eight Evidence-Based Principles Will Increase CSU Success Stories

The new year promises to be an exciting one in Court Service Units as we continue to focus on our transformation objectives of Reduce, Reform and Replace. The next few issues of the *CSUnity* will help increase our understanding of the cornerstones of EBPs especially as they apply to CSUs. Knowledge, planning, and training are keys to success.

Research has identified eight Evidence-Based Principles and Effective Practices that reliably produce sustained reductions in recidivism. Our goal is to improve overall organizational functioning and collaboration with service providers to ensure that implementation is consistent among CSUs. Once realized, system-involved families will receive “justice by design” rather than “justice by geography.”

The eight principles, shown in graphic form below, are as follows. In upcoming *CSUnity* issues, we will

(See “Principles,” page 2)



Intake staff, above, and probation/parole committee members.



New BADGE Manual Will Streamline Process

A lot has changed since DJJ introduced the Balanced Approach Data Gathering Environment (BADGE) in 2006. BADGE, an evolution of DJJ’s previous system known as the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS), tracks everything about a juvenile’s case from the first contact with the system (intake) through diversion/informal supervision, probation, detention, commitment, parole, and release. Data collected in BADGE are used for case management and in the budgeting, performance evaluation, and policy and planning processes. Initially, inadequacies or inaccuracies in the data due to a lack of operational definitions or training were able to be corrected easily, but this process has become cumbersome. With the agency now experiencing a significant culture change, the BADGE modules needed a fresh look along with the training and supporting guidance materials.

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BADGE

“These new materials will be available to all staff in the coming months,” says Senior Research Analyst Jared Miller, who convened and advised the two committees along with Robert Foster, Regional Program Manager–Western Region. “They will be on the S: drive, and we will announce when they become available. Staff will have access to a dictionary that clearly defines data points and coding options, as well as a manual that illustrates how to efficiently and effectively use BADGE.” Miller says that requested system changes have been catalogued and will need to be vetted with the aim of streamlining processes where appropriate, eliminating unnecessary data points, and lowering the number of requests from DJJ’s central office to verify the correctness and completeness of data. The youth DJJ serves also will benefit from more accurate data that will be used to plan and make better decisions about their future supervision.

“Just hearing how everybody does intake in their region was very valuable,” notes Tyrone Jackson of CSU



9–Williamsburg. Samantha Higgins of CSU 25–Staunton agreed, adding, “We all learned something new, and about features that we didn’t know about.”

The following two committees, consisting of intake staff and probation/parole staff, worked on the manual:

Intake Staff Committee: Amy Daniel, CSU 21–Martinsville; Dhara Amin, Project Consultant; Angela Fields, CSU 7–Newport News; Nina Shields, Project Consultant; Samantha Higgins, CSU 25–

Staunton; Kevin Heller, CSU 27–Pulaski; Ron Burroughs, CSU 12–Chesterfield; Tyrone Jackson, CSU 9–Williamsburg; Frank Shumaker, CSU 20L–Loudoun; Jared Miller, Senior Research Analyst; Robert Foster, Regional Program Manager – Western Region. Not pictured: Pat Bromm, CSU 31–Manassas; Melissa Edwards, CSU 10–Appomattox; Kara Ruskin, CSU 31–Manassas; Carol Todd, CSU 5–Suffolk.

Probation and Parole Committee: Robert Foster, Regional Program Manager – Western Region; Lewis Wright, CSU 14–Henrico; Jeffrey Brintle, CSU 29–Pearisburg; DeLando Gales, CSU 11–Petersburg; Jared Miller, Senior Research Analyst; Kim Lee, CSU 23–Salem; Fran Davison, CSU 19–Fairfax; Dhara Amin, Project Consultant; Ann Webb, CSU 2A–Accomac; Nina Shields, Project Consultant; Sheila Halsey, CSU 24–Lynchburg. Not pictured: Stephanie Green, CSU 13–Richmond; Karen Harris, CSU 16–Charlottesville; Christopher Hunt, CSU 18–Alexandria; Kelly Rummel, CSU 7–Newport News.

Principles

explore each principle in detail, and how CSU staff can best apply them in their daily work.

1. Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs. Offender assessments are most reliable and valid when staff are formally trained to administer tools.

2. Enhance Intrinsic Motivation. Research strongly suggests that motivational interviewing techniques, rather than persuasion tactics, effectively enhance motivation for initiating and maintaining behavior changes.

3. Target Interventions. There are five “sub-principles” we will examine: Risk Principle, Need Principle, Responsivity Principle, Dosage, and Treatment.

4. Skill Train with Directed Practice. To successfully deliver this treatment to offenders, staff must understand antisocial thinking, social learning,

and appropriate communication techniques.

5. Increase Positive Reinforcement. “Carrots” rather than “sticks” have always resulted in better behavioral changes. Research shows that a greater ratio of positive to negative reinforcements is optimal for promoting behavior changes.

6. Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities. Realign and actively engage pro-social supports for offenders in their communities.

7. Measure Relevant Processes/Practices. Maintaining accurate, detailed documentation of case information is the foundation of evidence-based practices.

8. Provide Measurement Feedback. Provide feedback to the offenders and the staff working with them about their progress. This builds accountability and improved outcomes.