



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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OJJDP Mental Health Initiatives

By Kay McKinney

To prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency, it is necessary to address not only the offenses that bring youth to the attention of the juvenile justice system but also the underlying problems these youth face, including mental health problems. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recognizes the critical importance of mental health problems in the lives of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and has been working for several years on a number of projects to increase knowledge and improve available services. This Fact Sheet highlights a number of current activities in this area.

Assessing Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Disorders Among Juvenile Detainees

Researchers at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, IL, have been studying alcohol, drug, and mental disorders among a large sample of juvenile detainees in the Cook County Detention Center in Chicago since November 1995. With funding from OJJDP, other Federal agencies, and private foundations, a longitudinal component was added to this study in November 1998. Investigators are tracking and reinterviewing members of the original sample, regardless of whether they have returned to the community, remain incarcerated, or have left the immediate area. The longitudinal study is allowing researchers to assess the developmental course of substance abuse and mental disorders among juvenile detainees; examine service availability, service use, and barriers to service access; and identify patterns of risky behavior in the areas of violence, substance use, and HIV/AIDS. An OJJDP Fact Sheet, *Assessing Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Disorders in Juvenile Detainees*, describes this research project.

Intergenerational Transmission of Antisocial Behavior

Researchers at the University at Albany, State University of New York, are examining the development of childhood antisocial behavior in a three-generation prospective panel study. The focus of this study is on the children of current participants in OJJDP's Rochester (NY) Youth Development Study, a longitudinal study

of 1,000 Rochester youth (who were in the seventh grade when the study began in 1987-88) and their parents. By the time they reached age 21, 40 percent of the original Rochester youth participants were parents. The intergenerational study will combine data obtained from the original study of the Rochester participants and their parents with new data on the children of the original participants. This approach provides a unique opportunity to examine and track the development of delinquent behavior across three generations in a particularly high-risk sample. The results of the study should provide very useful findings with policy implications for prevention programs. OJJDP is funding the program through an interagency agreement with the National Institute of Mental Health.

Mental Health Issue of OJJDP's Journal

OJJDP devoted an issue of its journal, *Juvenile Justice* (Volume VII, Number 1, April 2000), to the topic of mental health. Journal articles discuss youth with mental health disorders and emerging responses to them; Wraparound Milwaukee, a program that has successfully integrated a broad array of services to better meet the mental health needs of youth who have been adjudicated delinquent; and suicide prevention in juvenile facilities.

Mental Health-Juvenile Justice: Building an Effective Service Delivery Model

The goal of this new OJJDP-funded initiative is to create a model for the delivery of mental health and related substance abuse services to youth involved with the juvenile justice system. Researchers will review the literature on theory and best practices in the areas of screening, assessment, service provision, and quality assurance; conduct a survey of mental health needs and services among system-involved youth in selected regions; visit localities engaged in promising programs; and, based on these activities, develop a model to provide comprehensive mental health services at every point in the juvenile justice system. The model will subsequently be replicated and evaluated at several sites. This is the largest mental health initiative ever undertaken by OJJDP. The

research is being conducted by Policy Research Associates, Inc., of Delmar, NY.

Multisite, Multimodal Treatment Study of Children With ADHD

In 1992, the National Institute of Mental Health began a study of the long-term efficacy of stimulant medication and intensive behavioral and educational treatment for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). OJJDP's participation, which began in fiscal year 1998, is helping to fund continued investigation into these children's delinquent behavior and contact with the legal system, including arrests and court referrals. OJJDP staff have helped researchers revise one of their data collection instruments to capture information that would be of interest to juvenile justice researchers and practitioners. Some of the children involved in the study, who currently range in age from 9 to 13, have already come in contact with the juvenile justice system for behaviors such as truancy, fighting, and stealing. A May 2001 OJJDP Fact Sheet, *A Treatment Study of Children With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*, describes study findings.

Pathways to Desistance: A Prospective Study of Serious Adolescent Offenders

OJJDP-funded research at the University of Pittsburgh is following 1,200 serious adolescent offenders from Phoenix, AZ, and Philadelphia, PA, for 3 years after their involvement with the juvenile justice system. Researchers will interview the youth and individuals who know them; review official records (e.g., arrest records, institutional records, treatment summaries); and explore background characteristics (e.g., services received and sanction histories), mediating factors (e.g., vocational opportunities), changes in functioning (e.g., antisocial/prosocial behavior), and involvement with interventions and sanctions during the followup period. Data analysis will focus on identifying subgroups of offenders, differentiating those who continue offending from those

who desist. The researchers will evaluate the impact of life events, treatment interventions, and sanctions on patterns of antisocial and prosocial behavior, mental health, and social functioning.

Tribal Youth Program Mental Health Initiative

OJJDP's Tribal Youth Program is providing funds to American Indian and Alaska Native tribal communities to improve mental health services for tribal at-risk youth and juvenile offenders. The first six grantees selected for this program are engaged in a variety of diagnostic, service, and prevention projects, all with a significant mental health component. The grantees are the Hannahville Indian Community (Potawatomi Band) of Wilson, MI; the Chugachmiut of the Chugach Region, Anchorage, AK; the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Nixon, NV; the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians of Philadelphia, MS; the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Poplar, MT; and the South Central Foundation of Anchorage, AK. OJJDP will competitively select additional grantees in 2001.

For Further Information

The information in this Fact Sheet was extracted from *OJJDP Annual Report 2000*, which includes a full chapter on OJJDP's current mental health initiatives. All publications mentioned in the Fact Sheet are available from OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (800-638-8736) and at OJJDP's Web site (ojjdp.ncjrs.org).

Kay McKinney is a Senior Writer-Editor in OJJDP's Information Dissemination and Planning Unit.

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