THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES FOR
JUVENILE OFFENDERS

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES FOR
JUVENILE OFFENDERS


A Project



by



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Division of Social Work

Abstract

of

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The reintegration process of over 200,000 individuals from the juvenile justice system occurs each year nationally. The majority of those 200,000 youth returns to the juvenile justice system, or moves into the adult prison system within one year. The purpose of this study is to explore the current models for reintegration and aim to identify an effective practice model in the literature to decrease recidivism rates for juvenile offenders. By reviewing the social work and criminal justice literature, the author finds reintegration practice models and suggestions for policy improvements for this population. Through a secondary data analysis, this study offers an in-depth examination of the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice, in a case study. The model is chosen for its national recognition as a successful model in reducing recidivism rates and as an effective integrative practice model. In conclusion, the author encourages social workers to collaborate with the criminal justice and psychology fields in order to improve

aftercare services for juvenile offenders and help develop programs that are integrative to improve youth outcomes.

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Date

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

**Introduction**

The overlap between the criminal justice and social work fields is one that will most likely be examined by analysts of social policy in more depth in the 21$^{st}$ century. Since the prison population has increased exponentially in the past 30 years, it is obvious that prisoner releases back into our communities will be a policy issue that will warrant immediate attention from the social work field in order for community reintegration programs to be successful. The importance of finding social service resources for ex-offenders like affordable housing, access to job/vocational training, welfare benefits, healthcare and education will be a daunting task for the social work field, if community programs that have proven effective in the past, are not examined and improved upon with the intent to reduce rates of recidivism.

There may be a need for increased research on the juvenile ex-offender population and their particular rehabilitative needs. Providing the necessary resources for juvenile ex-offenders could contribute to the future health of our communities. By improving reintegration services for juveniles, communities will increase investments in schools, vocational opportunities, civic engagement and resources for families. In the under-served disadvantaged communities that social workers often work in, it is important to develop resources for juveniles and young adults so that the cycle of violence and

incarceration can be broken and the advancement of safer more productive communities will not just be a generalized vision, but a true reality.

## Background

The juvenile ex-offender population is a subset of a much larger population that is returning to our communities each year. There is a growing need to address the successful reentry of the general ex-offender population, which includes hundreds of thousands of prisoners expected to be released from prisons and back into our communities this year. The U.S. has one of the largest incarceration rates in the world. In fact, the United States has less than 5% of the world's population and 23.4% of the world's prison population (International Centre for Prison Studies, 2008). Another major factor is the cost of housing our prisoners, for instance, in 2006, $68,747,203,000 was spent on corrections (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011b). "The average annual operating cost per state inmate in 2001 was $22,650, or $62.05 per day; among facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, it was $22,632 per inmate, or $62.01 per day" (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011a, para. 2).

Since the United States has the largest incarceration rate in the world, housing over 2,000,000, and since the cost of housing those prisoners is astronomical, a policy change to decrease recidivism should be a high priority.

From a social work perspective, there should be a deep interest in the successful reintegration of juvenile and adult ex-offenders into our society and an equal interest in closing the revolving door back into prison. Social work values and ethics underline the

importance of pursuing social change on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008). Therefore, for social change to occur within this population, it is important to examine the high rates of recidivism among this ex-offender population and define what resources must be allocated to lower these rates. For example, "Based on available research, nearly two-thirds of all released prisoners are expected to be rearrested within three years. The impact of recidivism by returning prisoners is disproportionately felt among a relatively small number of disadvantaged communities" (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001, p. 12).

For the juvenile population, the rates are very similar, with two-thirds of youths being rearrested and one-third being re-incarcerated within a few years of release (Bureau of Data and Research, 1999; Krisberg & Howell, 1998; Krisberg, Austin, & Steele, 1991). California incarceration rates are the highest in the nation, sitting at 24% of all those incarcerated (Travis et al., 2001) and, therefore, also has higher rates of recidivism as well. For example, a study of the California Youth Authority indicated rates of re-arrest as high as 91% within two or three years (Byrnes, Macallair, & Shorter, 2002). The background research also indicates that the majority of re-arrests occur within the first year. The time right before release and right after is a pivotal time for resources to

be allocated for juveniles in order to address the recurrence of crime during the first year out of prison. The juvenile offender population in particular is plagued with a different myriad of barriers due to the fact that they are undergoing a developmental transition as well, while reentering society. The cognitive capacity, maturity and psychosocial context of youth, especially those who come into contact with the juvenile justice system differs greatly from those of adults and therefore young people must typically achieve a threshold level of psychosocial development in order to successfully assume adult roles (e.g.., worker, spouse, parent) (Grisso & Schwartz, 2000). Treatment and integrative services for young adults exiting the juvenile justice system must assess the differences in psychosocial development and aim to provide resources that help model independent living skills and provide the involvement of supportive adults in the process.

Reintegration programs in general, aim to fulfill the needs for additional resources to reduce recidivism (Byrnes et al., 2002). A working definition is a correctional type program that focuses on the transition from prison to community like a halfway house for example or a treatment/therapeutic program that starts in prison and then links with the community to continue care (Travis et al., 2001). In exploring the history of reintegration programs in the mid 1970s, there was an emphasis on programs to prepare inmates for the transition back to the community. There were employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, therapeutic and educational programs inside prison operations (Zhang, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006). Unfortunately, there seemed to be a definitive decline in these types of rehabilitative programs since the 1970s. Since then, there was more of an

emphasis on surveillance and incapacitation as a way to deter parolees from future crime (Zhang et al., 2006). Incapacitation efforts are evidenced in the three strikes law in California and longer sentencing laws. The theory is that these laws would deter habitual criminals from seeking a criminal life once returned to society. Unfortunately, the Three Strikes Law has not produced the intended results. Recidivism rates in the 1990s were still high and sentencing rates became higher, thus creating the problems of overcrowding our prisons and an increased state budget on corrections. For example, "from 1994, the year of the law's passage, until 2005, design capacity increased by 19, 884 beds, whereas the population of the state's severely overcrowded prisons increased by 47, 898 inmates" (Chen, 2008, p. 360). In the late 1990s, due to the state's increasing prison population, parolee population and budget constraints, policy makers, corrections administrators, and researchers developed a re-found interest in creating reintegration programs that were community based. This interest was peaked by high parolee return-to-prison rates, and an acknowledgment that changes in parole practices such as determinate release and an emphasis on surveillance over services and assistance were ineffective in reducing recidivism (Seiter & Kadela, 2003).

Newer reintegration programs therefore seek to identify the common components for effective interventions in housing, medical care, job placement, drug treatment and family supports (Mears & Travis, 2004). These needs are shared by the majority of ex-offenders leaving the criminal justice system and improvements in programs have proven to reduce re-offending rates (Travis et al., 2001). The fact that many prison-based programs that would help individuals leaving prison deal with these problems while in

prison, have been under funded in recent years must be acknowledged. Only 6% of the $22 billion spent on prisons in the federal budget in 1996 was spent on prison programs like substance abuse treatment, job training or mental health services (Chen, 2008). In California, one survey of parolees reported that about 85% of the state's parole population are chronic drug or alcohol abusers; 70 to 90% are unemployed; 50% are functionally illiterate; 18% have psychiatric problems; and 10% are homeless (California Department of Corrections, 1997). It is thus imperative to develop community-based programs that will help ex-offenders with these barriers once back in society.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

There is a lack of effective community-based services for juvenile ex-offenders and high recidivism rates. Further, services between the criminal justice, social work and psychology fields are fragmented and there is a need of more integrative services to serve the juvenile ex-offender population.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is: to fill the gap in the social work literature, develop a comprehensive strategy that will link research and policy designs to improve aftercare services for juvenile ex-offenders, and foster collaboration between the criminal justice, psychology and social work fields. In addition, the purpose of this study is to increase findings on community-based reintegration services for juvenile ex-offenders and increase findings on effective interventions that have lowered recidivism rates. The approach is to examine the current literature on community-based reintegration programs

for juveniles and young adults and define the characteristics that are most effective and provide recommendations for service-oriented fields that are invested in the successful transition of young adults back into communities.  The secondary purpose is to expand the knowledge base on the importance of long-term aftercare supports for this population and find recommended interventions at the micro and mezzo levels and policy revisions that can be made at the macro level.  The study will primarily analyze one particular program for their current effectiveness, the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice, a program designed by the Division of Youth Services of Missouri, a state agency.  By uncovering the benefits of this model, state and local governments may be able to develop new policy revisions to invest some of their resources in preventative measures versus spending more money on incarceration.

## Theoretical Framework

The two theoretical frameworks used in this study are the Systems Theory and Social Learning Theory.  Systems theory purports that a person's particular situation is undoubtedly influenced by the world that surrounds them.  Every person in society is connected to the people around them and the community that they are a part of and therefore it is important in Systems theory to explore all levels that a person functions within to make changes in their life.  Systems Theory in social work strives to improve the "goodness of fit" between a client and their environment (Ambrosino, Ambrosino, Hefferman, & Shuttlesworth, 2005).  The research proposed seeks to enhance the

connection between clients (juvenile ex-offenders) and the communities that they will return to once out of prison.

In examining an ex-offenders reintegration experience one must look at the micro, mezzo and macro levels that impact the individual. At the micro level, the individual psyche and emotional readiness of the juvenile ex-offender as s/he re-enters society may be examined and this may also include documenting physical and mental health concerns. At the mezzo level the amount of family and friend supports should be examined as it has been found that the more communication a juvenile ex-offender has with family and friends while in prison will determine the amount of easiness with which they rejoin their friends and family back in the community (Travis et al., 2001). At the macro level, the framework will be applied to determine if the current community-based social work approaches are effective in reducing recidivism rates in juvenile ex-offenders or if new approaches need to be implemented in communities so that resources can be made more readily available. Systems theory is applicable to this research because the improvement of the individual's reintegration efforts into a community has not just a singular effect on the individual but on the family they may be rejoining, and to the community as a whole. Social work interventions for juvenile ex-offenders can be improved upon on all levels as they are all interdependent upon each other.

The social learning theory operates under the assumption that people are capable of self-directed behavior change and an example of social learning is how people can develop social skills after they are in contact with other people who effectively model

interpersonal skills (Bandura, 1977).  Social learning "involves a triadic reciprocal interaction among the environment, personal factors (beliefs, preferences, expectations, self-perceptions, and interpretations) and individual behavior"  (Corey, 2009, p. 236). Interventions that incorporated a social learning framework focus simultaneously on key individual variables and context characteristics for guaranteed success in reducing criminal behavior.  The goal of using social learning techniques in interventions with juvenile ex-offenders is to help them develop cognitive skills, cope with diverse challenges, and to model effective interpersonal skills.  By providing training in these three areas, juvenile ex-offenders will acquire a sense of efficacy and a sense of personal identity.  Once a juvenile is returned to the community it is imperative that they find a caring supportive adult who can continue to model these behaviors, solidifying the skills developed through a social learning approach in treatment.

**Definition of Terms**

"Dual status youth": youth who navigate both the juvenile justice system and the Child
>    Protective Services system, often times becoming part of the foster care system
>    (Abrams, Shannon, & Sangalang, 2008; Dunlap, 2006; Ryan, 2006).

"Continuum of Care": services that begin while incarcerated or within the juvenile justice
>    system, continue throughout a transitional living program and once returned into
>    the community with a follow-up time of at least a year (Abrams et al., 2008).

"Restorative justice": an effort to restore the torn fabric of community and of wholeness

to all those affected by crime, to repair the harm done to the victim and

community, and to make the offender accountable to both (Umbreit, 1993).

"Ex-offender": an individual who is no longer incarcerated and who is reentering society

by returning to their community.

"Incapacitation": to deprive of the legal power to act.

**Assumptions**

Economically disadvantaged communities to which juvenile ex-offenders return,

often lack the availability of resources necessary to address their needs. These

communities need investment in education, vocational opportunities and social services

to better serve this population. In addition, the dialogue between various disciplines of

criminal justice, psychology, and social work could be improved to provide more

integrative services based in communities.

**Justification**

This research study aligns with the social work mission and its core principles.

The research seeks to enhance the human well-being, with particular attention to meeting

the needs and empowering vulnerable, oppressed and impoverished populations (NASW,

2008). The research particularly points to the improvement of organizations,

communities, and other social institutions to meet the individual needs and solve social

problems (NASW, 2008). This study provides an impetus to challenge social injustice in

a population that needs special attention in the 21$^{st}$ century. The future health of our

communities is at stake as more and more offenders are being released from prison. The determining factor in the functionality of these communities will be determined by social workers' committed interest to allocating resources to the juvenile ex-offender population in their new environment. The improvement of communities' access to resources and neighborhood betterment also rely on individual members to develop strategies for increased citizen engagement, including juveniles to assist in accessibility to resources.

## Limitations

This study is limited in its inability to find a wealth of social work literature devoted to juvenile ex-offender rehabilitation, instead relying on many sources from the criminal justice literature. In formulating a mixed methods study design, the researcher will be limited to interviewing staff from one juvenile reintegration program and providing secondary data analysis on one specific model, in the form of a case study. The research then will be limited to their findings and recommendations for policy and research, as it pertains to this particular population. The researcher found insight into the needs of youth transitioning in and out of public systems of care. The researcher discusses interventions that focus on expanding community resources and developing innovative and integrative strategies for successful reintegration, as outlined in the case study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

**Introduction**

The reintegration process, also known as reentry, is a journey that over 600,000 ex-offenders experience each year (Roman & Travis, 2004). Of those 600,000 ex-offenders, approximately 200,000 are coming from the juvenile justice system (Mears & Travis, 2004). This review of the literature will examine the formidable challenge of returning former juvenile offenders back into their communities. The goal of successful reentry is enabling them to access the necessary social supports to become contributing members of their respective communities. The review includes three major themes. The first examines the barriers to reentry and common risk factors associated with unsuccessful reentry. The next section reviews studies of former and current reentry programs and initiatives that have been successful in reducing recidivism. Given the magnitude of the growing reintegration problem, the last thematic section includes the policy implications for juvenile and young adult reintegration and concentrate on the implications for the social work field. Gaps in the literature are presented. Any recommendations for future research on community-based reintegration programs will conclude the review.

**Barriers to Reentry and Common Risk Factors**

The common barriers to reentry and risk factors often associated with unsuccessful transitions back into communities are examined in this first section. Special

attention will be paid to understanding the risk factors that often contribute to recidivism. Included in this section is a review of the research on a special population within the overall juvenile ex-offender population, the "dual-status" or "cross-over" youth (Abrams, Shannon, Sangalang, 2008; Dunlap, 2006; Ryan, 2006).  This review of the literature will cover the challenges of the reentry process for the overall juvenile population and this subset population.

The reentry process can be quite challenging for a large variance of reasons.  The studies that have been conducted on this subject have attempted to explain the process from the youth perspective and gain an understanding of how we can improve youth reentry programs (Mears & Travis, 2004).  The research is lacking a wealth of empirical quantitative studies that document barriers experienced by juvenile ex-offenders focusing very little on the interventions needed by that population, including assessing programs that help them navigate school, work and home life (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004). This section will review the common barriers to successful reentry, what can be learned about the common shared risk factors associated with this population and what risk factors contribute to re-offending as well.

**Substance Abuse**

Previous drug involvement is a major risk factor for youthful offenders.  Coupled by the fact that substance abuse treatment in juvenile facilities is diminishing or not offered at all, this presents a major problem to providing a path towards a drug-free lifestyle once reentering the community.  For example, "in a 1997 survey of short- and

long-term juvenile corrections facilities, SAMSHA found that 36% offered various types of substance abuse treatment" (Reclaiming Futures, 2003). Treatment concerns for this population should be major priority of these institutions given how many juvenile offenders were under the influence of drugs and or alcohol when committing their respective offenses (Kazdin, 2000). In the research it was found that 9% of institutionalized offenders younger than 18 reported having committed their offense under the influence of alcohol, 15% reported having been under the influence of illicit drugs and 23% under the influence of both. Additionally youth prosecuted for drug crimes were more likely to report being under the influence of drugs at the time of their offense but the rates of drug involvement were high for all offending groups: 59% of drug offenders, 40% of property offenders, 37% of public order offenders, 36% of violent offenders and 33% of status offenders were under the influence of drugs at the time of their committed offense (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Kazdin, 2000; Snyder, 2004).

These findings contribute to the literature by establishing that substance abuse is prevalent amongst the juvenile offender population. Unfortunately treatment services while incarcerated and treatment services offered to this population while transitioning back into their communities is not adequate nor does it provide for all those youth who need services (Muck et al., 2001; Stevens & Morral, 2003; Wagner, Brown, Monti, Myers, & Waldron, 1999). "The Reclaiming Futures project estimates that there are only 140,000 publicly funded treatment slots for juveniles in the United States, less than one sixth the number needed to provide treatment to juvenile arrestees in need of drug or

alcohol treatment" (Altchuler & Brash, 2004, p. 81). The literature also indicates that the substance abuse programs offered in juvenile justice facilities often mirrors adult treatment models and therefore is not suitable for adolescents and may be less effective (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Muck et al., 2001; Stevens & Morral, 2003; Wagner et al., 1999). Treatment therefore needs to be consistent and age appropriate in order to be effective at lowering the risk factor that substance abuse poses to reentry and preventing recidivism.

**Education**

Another major barrier to reentry into communities is education and schooling. Juvenile ex-offenders are often times way behind their peers in educational development. Many suffer from learning disabilities, exacerbating the transition back into school. In fact, research indicates that 20% to 50% of incarcerated youth have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Snyder, 2004). In addition to suffering from learning disorders, many incarcerated youth were behind in educational attainment before being incarcerated. For example, in a study developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention they found reports from teachers indicating that 32% of juveniles read at or below a fourth-grade reading level, 27% at a fifth- to sixth-grade level, 20% at a seventh- to eighth-grade level and 21% at or above a ninth-grade level (Parent et al., 1994). Even during incarceration, educational attainment rates often remain stagnant or with marginal improvements. Research from Dedel (1997) stated that 75% of students in custody advance less than a full grade level while incarcerated. Because the

educational process is so disrupted by periods of confinement juvenile ex-offenders find it increasingly difficult to return to an age-graded sequentially structured environment like school. They also may feel the added pressure of completing their secondary or post-secondary education because a higher level of education is seen as socially desirable and a normative expectation within society (Sullivan, 2004).

The educational needs for this population to reintegrate into their community schools is greater complicated by the fact that often the schools they return to are already strapped for resources or are not receptive. This fact is unsettling knowing that research indicates that immediate involvement in some type of education upon release is imperative to reducing recidivism during the first 12 months when youth are most likely to re-offend (Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2004). In this study conducted in Oregon, youth were involved in two programs that were successful at increasing school engagement rates post incarceration. The first, ARIES (Achieving Rehabilitation Independence, and Employment Success) for youth with emotional disabilities, demonstrated its capacity for providing service coordination, academic support, job placement and training for 82 youth with a 65% success rate of engaging youth in school or work (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002).

The second project called Youth Transition Project that was a joint venture by the Oregon Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is now operating in 35 counties, 174 high schools and has served over 4,000 special education students. This program has received recognition for its high success rate at keeping

juvenile ex-offenders from re-offending with a 77% school engagement rate (Bullis &

Yovanoff, 2002). In a different study, examining resiliency amongst post-incarcerated

young adults, the participants also cited school engagement as a primary reason in

keeping them from re-offending. It was found in that study that schools were a

mechanism for youth to access structure, positive adult influence, skills and problem-

solving experiences (Todis, Bullis, Waintrup, Schultz, & D' Ambrosio, 2001). It is clear

from this research that school engagement is an influential factor in reducing recidivism

rates, especially if within a shorter time period post release.

**Mental Health**

Mental health disorder prevalence amongst juvenile offenders is a major barrier to

reentry. Gone untreated, these disorders can impair decision making, potentially leading

to re-arrest. Studies have found a general higher prevalence of mental illness in

committed juveniles over the general juvenile population, with a conservative estimate

showing the prevalence as four times greater than the general population (Kazdin, 2000;

Otto, Greenstein, Johnson, & Friedman, 1992; Roberts, Attkisson, & Rosenblatt, 1998;

Snyder, 2004). General prevalence rates among juvenile offenders for less serious mental

disorders such as attention deficit disorder, mood and anxiety disorders and conduct

disorders are estimated to be at 80% (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Cocozza & Skowyra,

2000; Mears, 2001). The consensus in the literature thus dictates that youth with mental

health disorders make up the majority of youth in correctional facilities (Altschuler &

Brash, 2004; Teplin et al., 2007; Wasserman et al., 2003). If these disorders are not

properly diagnosed while in custody the likelihood of continued delinquency upon

reentry back into the community is high.  In addition, the research indicates that the

assessment for mental health disorders and treatment while in custody is often

inadequate.

> A 1990 national study of needs assessment instruments found that many states did
>
> not administer needs assessments until after a youth was committed, that only one
>
> third of states used a formal needs assessment instrument, that only one half of all
>
> states assessed emotional and psychological needs, and that the quality of the
>
> assessment varied dramatically across the country. Mears points out that although
>
> it is likely that the use and quality of needs assessment tools may have increased
>
> since the study, only very significant increases would begin to meet the mental
>
> health needs of committed young people.  (Altschuler & Brash, 2004, p. 80)

The approach to treatment also needs to be integrative to encompass those youth who

may be suffering from co-occurring disorders and treatment needs to continuous after

release back into communities.

One model of treatment that has been very effective for this population is rooted

in the Recovery model that derives its concepts from a strengths-based social work

perspective towards client treatment.  The recovery model in mental health services aims

to put the consumer in charge of their own process.  During this process the consumer

will recognize the internal conditions that will help them through this process.  Those

four major components or conditions, are hope, empowerment, responsibility, and

building a personal niche in life. The attitudes that define hope are recognizing and accepting that there is a problem, committing to a change and focusing on individual strengths and weaknesses instead of deficits (Greenley & Jacobson, 2001).

In addition, by focusing on separating the diagnosis from the person and providing avenues in which consumers can exercise their autonomous rights in their own recovery, the recovery model allows consumers and providers to work together for common goals and change the socially-constructed discourse on mental illness. The juvenile ex-offender population is already stigmatized by their delinquent or criminal actions so supplying a treatment model that aims to remove the stigmatization of mental illness would be an effective way to enable ex-offender youth to act autonomously and to be empowered to make their own choices about their futures (Greenley & Jacobson, 2001). The recovery model also emphasizes a connection to the community and therefore works towards encouraging the consumer to seek social and community supports (Farkas, Gagne, Anthony & Chamberlin, 2005). There are many methods of treatment for the mentally ill ex-offender youth population but with its emphasis on client self-determination and promotion of developing independent plans for the future, this model may be one of the most appropriate for this population.

**Lack of Family Supports**

One of the most common risk factors found in the research was the juvenile's previous living arrangements before and after incarceration and lack of family supports. The research finds that committed youth are more likely to come from single family

homes and have some relatives that have also been incarcerated (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Snyder, 2004). A survey conducted in 1987 by the Bureau of Justice Statistics of Youth in Custody represents the most recent comprehensive study of this particular population. Some of the findings include:

> Fifty four percent 54% of committed youth lived primarily with their mother (48%). Another 10% lived with their grandparents. More than half (52%) had at least one family member who had served time in jail or prison. Of these committed youth 25%) had a brother and/or a sister who had been incarcerated, 24% had a father that had been incarcerated, 9% a mother, and 13% had another relative who had served time in a jail or prison. (Snyder, 2004, p. 49)

The literature also indicates that many of the committed youth are subject to prior victimization in the form of child abuse or neglect and is a continued risk factor for this population (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Given how many committed youth already come from unstable home environments, finding guardianship with a responsible adult or alternative living placements needs to be a top priority. The population of juvenile ex-offenders who are coming directly from the Child Protective Services System into the juvenile justice system, often called "dual status" youth, warrants coordinated responses and its own body of research dedicated to understanding their specific needs. Therefore the next subsection of the review will cover this population and their corresponding risk factors in more depth.

**Risk Factors for Dual Status Youth**

The precise number involved in the population of "dual status" youth is difficult to measure within the research. It is however noted in the literature that maltreatment and dependency are found to be significant risk factors to juvenile delinquency or incarceration (Abrams et al., 2008; Ryan & Testa, 2005; Widom, 2003). In addition, foster care status is a contributing factor to criminal involvement. In the literature, two studies indicated that foster care youth are at more risk to be involved in the juvenile justice system more than the general population. For example, 18% of youth transitioning out of out-of-home care had been arrested at least once within 12 to 18 months (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith as cited by Abrams et al., 2008). When comparing a sample of youth transitioning from out-of-home care with a nationally representative sample one study found that the proportion of offenses committed by transitioning youth was double that of the general population in the national sample (Cusick & Courtney, 2007).

Despite recognizing this population's concurrent risks, very little research has been dedicated to examining how to lower recidivism rates for dual status youth. Specifically, little research has been dedicated to looking at correctional treatment programs (Abrams et al., 2008) and which ones have worked best for this population. Only one study mentioned in the literature examined how a "Positive Peer Culture" model (Ryan, 2006) was less effective at reducing recidivism for dependent youth versus their non-dependent counterparts. Other empirical studies in the literature only prove that

dual status youth are often stigmatized more for their actions, resulting in harsher punishments for less severe crimes and inadequate legal representation than their non-dependent peers (Abrams et al., 2008).

Since youth that navigate both the child welfare system and juvenile justice system often have complex and competing public bureaucracies handling their cases, there has been a more coordinated effort from federal and state governments to connect services and design programs that will assist youth with concurrent child dependency and delinquency statuses.  For example, in 2002, an amendment of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act did include provisions that encouraged the development of programs toward dual system youth to help reduce recidivism (Abrams et al., 2008). Although it is promising that federal and state policies are being revised to recognize the concurrent difficulties of this population, there needs to be more research on this population and more accountability from both systems.  In addition more research needs to be conducted on transitional needs and services for this population in order for programs to be effectively designed and carried out.

One of the most effective ways to acknowledge the barriers to reentry for this particular population is to conduct more qualitative studies in order to understand the process of reentry through the perceptions of those who actually participate in this transition (Fields & Abrams, 2010).  One recent study was designed specifically to reach young people and their perspectives on the reentry experience.  In this study 71 youth (36 men and 35 women) were interviewed about the transition experiences leaving a juvenile

probation camp facility and returning to their communities.  The young men reported

needs for obtaining higher education or a plan to attend vocational school, 39% over

young women reporting similar needs at 23%.  Both young women and young men

reported their desire to obtain financial independence and employment with 90% of the

respondents indicating employment as an immediate need upon release.  Mental health

needs were also shared by both young men and young women in this study with 30% of

respondents self-identifying a mental health concern.  Most received services while at the

juvenile probation camp, with 65% receiving services.  In addition, "Just about one-third

of all respondents stated that they planned to obtain counseling after leaving camp.  There

was a statistically significant difference in young women's intentions to seek mental

health assistance upon their reentry compared to the young men" (Fields & Abrams,

2010, p. 10).  It is clear from this qualitative research that the identified needs from

juvenile ex-offenders are consistent with what service providers and researchers have

indicated as important service needs.  It is, therefore, important to locate integrative or

wrap-around models like Multi-Systemic Therapy and family-oriented reentry

approaches that may be effective at reaching all of the identified needs (Drake, Aos, &

Miller, 2009).  Past and current models of practice will now be examined to find common

elements that have proven their efficacy in meeting the needs of this population.

### Current Reentry Programs for Juveniles—Successes and Failures

This section reviews studies of former and current reentry programs and

initiatives that have been successful in reducing recidivism.  Included in the literature are

findings on transitional and community-based services for ex-offender youth and their families.  The research indicates that there is a definitive need for more focus on helping youth continue to practice the pro-social behavior and life skills learned while in confinement (Drake et al., 2009); developing the structure and goal-setting techniques once at home with their families (Abrams et al., 2008; Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).  As a sub-theme in the literature, the review examines a few studies that are critical of only viewing lowered recidivism rates as an indicator of reentry success and instead encourage research that focuses on the overall improvement of sustainable services based in communities as an integral part of the reentry process (Simmons, 2002; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).  Those articles also offer a critical view of programs that do not take specific steps in their interventions to acknowledge race and socioeconomic status as a structural disadvantage to successful reentry back into communities (Simmons, 2002; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).  Another subsection in the literature will review the impact of restorative justice models with juvenile ex-offenders and examine the models as possible alternatives to the traditional adjudication style of juvenile justice.

In order to fully understand the multitude of reentry or reintegration programs available to juveniles it is important to first look at models used in the past and for adult offenders.  Many of the programs available today use treatment models that are used with the adult population and the research indicates that is partly why they are unsuccessful in reducing recidivism rates, as developmentally speaking, juveniles are not as prepared for

the transitions expected upon them once leaving correctional facilities and moving back into communities, as adults may be (Steinberg, Chung, & Little, 2004). The transitional process for juveniles or young adults may be different but the rehabilitative components offered while incarcerated and upon release does not vary as much, therefore the author will briefly examine the history of reintegration programs.

The California Department of Corrections created a multifaceted community-based reintegration program in 1998 to help facilitate parolees' successful reintegration into society. The program was called Preventing Parolee Crime Program. The program aimed to provide "drug abuse treatment and education, job training and placement services, and math and literacy training in community and residential environments" (Zhang, Callanan, Roberts, 2006, p. 553). The research for this program found several factors that determined the effectiveness of community-based programs.

The most critical determinant of a program's success was whether its services matched the needs of the offender, particularly those at highest risk of recidivist. Programs that matched offender needs with offered services were estimated to reduce recidivism risk by as much as 50% (Zhang et al., 2006). Other important characteristics of successful programs included (a) intensive behavioral treatment that consumed offenders' daily schedules, (b) ample positive reinforcement for pro-social behavior, and (c) providing pro-social contexts to encourage and reinforce offenders' attempts to maintain law-abiding lifestyles (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Zhang et al., 2006).

The program's success is evidenced in its ability to reduce recidivism rates. Its special attention to individual client needs through the context of community demonstrates its capability to use the systems theory in practice effectively.  It is indicated by the literature that this particular program reduced rates as low as 13% for some participants in two of the four programs available to participants in the study (Zhang et al., 2006).  Providing services with an emphasis on education, housing, job placement and substance abuse treatment gave this particular program an opportunity to address community issues as well as the ones experienced by ex-offenders.

The major services provided in the program listed above are services that are also needed by juvenile youth, with the possible exception being housing (Fields & Abrams, 2010).  The services needed for juvenile ex-offenders vary only because of the different developmental milestones juveniles may have achieved in "education, mental health, substance abuse, family contexts, employment experiences, and employability, and experience with living independently"(Mears & Travis, 2004, p. 7).  Reentering youth are experiencing two major transitions when reentering society, one from a life of confinement to community and another from adolescence to adulthood.  This double transition means that reentering youth are facing some of the same difficulties as reentering adults but must navigate through moving from dependence on their family or origin to independence in endeavors in school, work and seeking intimate partnerships (Sullivan, 2004).

Although the particular client needs for juveniles does not perfectly match the client needs for adults, the treatment approach towards changing juveniles' behavior towards more pro-social behavior and working with them to improve positive decision making skills is one cited in the literature as an effective treatment approach. Since juvenile youth may need additional assistance in learning independent living skills, reintegration programs and treatment programs while in correctional facilities should focus on obtaining those skills. To make the transition to adulthood successful requires psychosocial maturity and this usually occurs between ages 16-24 (Steinberg et al., 2004). In this study, the authors Steinberg, Chung, and Little examined the psychosocial capabilities of juveniles and young adults ages 16-24 to determine the outcomes of successful transitions into adulthood. The term psychosocial capacities is used here to describe a youth's ability to provide resources for oneself to create and take advantage of positive life experiences (Steinberg et al., 2004). Their study emphasized the importance of facilitating psychosocial development while juveniles are still in the system (Steinberg et al., 2004).

In addition they posit,

> mature judgments are the product of an interaction between cognitive and
> psychosocial factors, with competent decision making potentially undermined by
> deficiencies in either domain. An individual facing a particular decision may have
> the cognitive skills to evaluate the costs and benefits of various courses of action,

but if the individual is especially impulsive, he or she may not make as wise

decision.  (Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996, p. 251)

They argue that decision-making skills of adolescents within the juvenile justice

system can be enhanced through psychosocial development and their findings suggest

that youth need to stimulate development in three major domains with specific tasks.

They are cited in the literature as: (a) mastery and competence (e.g., developing skills

that permit successful participation in the work force and independent living;) (b)

interpersonal relationships and social functioning(e.g., Interacting appropriately with

others, behaving responsibly towards the larger community); and (c ) self-definition and

self-governance (e.g., developing a positive sense of self-worth and an ability to set and

achieve personal goals) (Steinberg et al., 2004).

The role of supporting adults in helping with this transition is also needed for

psychosocial maturity to be reached and for adolescents to make significant strides in

becoming responsible and healthy adults (Anthony et al., 2010; Steinberg et al., 2004).

Adult mentoring and parental supports have been identified by young ex-offenders as a

critical factor in their own reentry success (Baltodano, Mathur, & Rutherford, 2005;

Anthony et al., 2010).  When parental support is absent, finding an interim adult mentor

either through an aftercare program or within the community can provide similar benefits

as they may see their adult mentor as a friend and a guide (Hughes, 1998; Todis et al.,

2001).  Overall, having a guiding adult who can maintain a good relationship with youth

and model appropriate behavior seems to improve successful reentry experiences and fosters youth development.

In addition to parental supports facilitating psychosocial development, the literature suggests peer relationships and the characteristics of school, workplace and neighborhood contexts also play a significant role in youths' successful transition into adulthood. The literature indicates that first the normative pressures in prosocial peer groups lead adolescents to adult-approved activities that inevitably deter them from delinquent activity; second, social support from peers can be a replacement for the lack of family supports at home and finally the overall quality of intimate relationships with friends will contribute to the mental health and adjustment of adolescents (McLaughlin, 2000; Steinberg et al., 2004). The school setting provides an opportunity for youth to forge meaningful relationships with positive role models, like teachers, improve their interpersonal skills with peers and participate in varying leadership opportunities through extracurriculars like sports (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). The work setting provides youth opportunities to establish financial independence, learn about general expectations that society has for adults and teaches them responsible behavior, like showing up for work on time (Mortimer, Finch, Ryu, Shanahan, & Call, 1996). The neighborhood setting allows youths to develop psychosocial maturity by encouraging participation in community youth groups, where youths can acquire more social competence, prosocial peer networks and increase civic engagement (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004). It is argued in the literature that by providing easy access to all of these types of settings once

reintegrated into the community, adolescents will make a better transition into independent adulthood.

There are some common variables in intervention models that have been developed that work the best to reduce recidivism and provide easier transitions for juvenile offender youth. The literature indicates that practice with independent living skills, within the context of structure, supervision and case management drives daily planning skills for youth (Abrams et al., 2008). Based on a study found in the literature, programs should include "(a) high amounts of structure, (b) clear expectations and consequences, (c ) a demonstrated sensitivity to interpersonal dynamics, (d) an intensive structure, and (e) a program duration of nine or more months" (Todis et al. as cited in Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004, p. 90).

Although there were many references to the types of intervention models that would be best for juvenile reentry very few were evaluated or mentioned in the literature. One model that was mentioned in the literature was noted for its efficacy by focusing on aftercare components. This initiative was called the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP). The program model includes "an emphasis on prerelease planning and services; structured, short-term transitional programming; and structured, longer term reintegrative activities that balance supervision, treatment, and services" (Mears & Travis, 2004, p. 13). This program is designed to facilitate over-arching case management through every component of the justice system. It includes five major principles that guides its service delivery and

prepares youth for their reentry back into the community: (a) prepares youth for progressively increased responsibility and freedom within the community; (b) facilitates youth and community involvement; (c) works with both the offender and the targeted community supports (e.g., families, peers, schools and potential employers) on the qualities needed for successful community adjustment; (d) develops new resources and supports when needed; and (e) monitors both the youth and the community on their ability to work with each other effectively (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994; Mears & Travis, 2004). The study was a mixed-methods evaluation study that took place at a public correctional institution for felony-level juvenile offenders. The facility housed youth offenders for periods of 9-12 months and offered both correctional (punitive and rules-driven) and rehabilitative (therapeutic) programming (Abrams et al., 2008).

In 2002 the institution implemented a transitional living program (TLP), a six-week intensive program focused on obtaining independent living skills for successful reintegration. In this study the authors conducted a quantitative analysis of recidivism outcomes for the graduates of the TLP program conducted qualitative interviews with youth participants and program staff. The IAP model is used in subsequent community-based aftercare programs and although noted by staff as providing more resources for its participants and noted by juveniles as helping them develop independent living skills; the descriptive statistics indicate that the program has not lowered recidivism rates with this population and the reconviction rate stands at 33-34% before and after the advent of this program (Abrams et al., 2008).

**Interventions Using a Restorative Justice Model**

The ideas of restorative justice are rooted in the concept that for justice to be fully restorative it must be based on healing instead of punishment. Restorative justice therefore supports and involves the victim, holds the offender accountable, requires him or her to make amends, uses the resources of the community and helps to reintegrate the offender back into the community (Zehr, 1990). This model is emerging in the criminal justice and social work literature and also is becoming an alternative form of justice when working with the juvenile ex-offender population. There are four guiding principles to the restorative justice model:

> (1) criminal acts do more than break the law, they cause harm, and society's primary response should be to try and repair the harm; (2) if the offender is known, he or she should also be required to make reparation for the harm, insofar as that is possible. Reparation may be made to the victim him or herself, or to the community. It need not be in the form of money; sometimes the offender can do some work for the victim, or if the victim does not want that, for the community; (3) in restorative justice both victims and offenders are offered the opportunity to communicate, if they are both willing; (4) the community should play a part in both in helping the victim and in making it possible for the offender to make amends and to be reintegrated into the community. This may mean providing training, therapy or other help, or enabling the offender to find work so that he can pay compensation. (Wright, 1998, pp. 269-270)

Restorative justice can take many forms as alternatives to adjudication or incarceration.

The most common ones found in the literature include the victim-offender dialogue,

family group conferencing, and community conferencing (Abrams, Umbreit, & Gordon,

2006; Baffour, 2006; Umbreit, 1993; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2007).

Victim-offender dialogue or mediation programs provide a conflict resolution

process that is intended to be fair to both the victim and offender (Umbreit, 1993) and

allow a mediator to facilitate a discussion between victim and offender focused on

addressing informational and emotional needs of the victim, including discussing victim's

losses and developing a mutually acceptable restitution plan. This form of justice moves

away from seeing offenses against the state, thus ignoring the needs of the victim or

rights of the offender, to one that involves both parties. There is continued policy support

for these types of programs nationally and as of 2001 there were more than 300 victim-

offender mediation programs in the U.S. and more than 1,400 in 17 countries

internationally and the numbers continue to rise (Abrams et al., 2006).

In the current literature 40 empirical evaluative studies have examined the

outcomes of Victim-Offender Mediation programs, focusing on its use for juvenile

offenders. These studies used such indicators as victim and offender satisfaction, the

fulfillment of restitution agreements, and recidivism rates to assess efficacy (Abrams et

al., 2006). As indicated in the literature most of these studies underwent a meta-analysis

by Umbreit et al. (2002) and found that satisfaction amongst victims and offenders were

consistently high across sites, cultures and seriousness of the offense. In addition they

found offenders report higher levels of satisfaction with the criminal justice system as a whole and view the victim offender mediation (VOM) process as fair. The research on the impact that VOM programs have on preventing recidivism is mixed. One study in Michigan showed no statistically significant difference in recidivism rates of participants in a VOM program and those who went through a court-imposed process (Roy, 1993) but some more recent studies conducted in Oregon and Tennessee indicate that youth who participate in a VOM program were less likely to re-offend (Nugent & Paddock, 1995; Umbreit & Coates, 1992).

In an effort to understand why a program like this may impact recidivism rates and positive outcomes for young offenders, authors Abrams et al. (2006) lead a qualitative study with seven juvenile offenders and their families to gather insight on their perceptions on this process. The authors used semi-structured interviews for both the young offenders and their family participants. Most youthful participants saw the program as a way to gain closure on the offense, have the victim understand them in a new, human way and providing the impetus to life-changing behavior like participating in the recovery process for addiction, for example (Abrams et al., 2006). The parents viewed the program primarily as a way to have their children express regret and to hold them more accountable for their crimes (Abrams et al., 2006). Overall this research signaled that the program was highly satisfactory for the majority of its participants but did not provide results that described whether the program may influence their future involvement in crime.

Another form of restorative justice is the family group conferencing strategy. This strategy is deemed in the literature as being effective in working with female youth offenders and particularly those of color. The family group conferencing model (FCG) is

a desirable intervention strategy because it allows for youth to make productive

contributions, build competency, and to obtain a sense of belonging within their

community. By addressing youth at the earliest stages of criminal activity, FCG

can promote practical strategies for reducing the overrepresentation of African-

American and Latino youth and reducing rates of female adjudication in the

criminal justice system through diversion from traditional justice systems.

(Baffour, 2006, p. 560)

In this study the author aimed to further evaluative studies on the effectiveness of this intervention strategy, as there are few in the literature. The study was conducted with young offenders from the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania Police Project, with 140 property offenses and 75 violent offenses. Two-thirds in each offense type were chosen for FCG and one-third as a control group went through the formal adjudication process (Baffour, 2006). The process entails recruiting voluntary mediators who facilitate the conference, inviting victims and their supportive parties and offenders and their supportive parties to come together in a safe environment to discuss the crime. The conference mediators follow a scripted protocol developed by (O'Connell, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 1999) that dictates the order of the discussion. First offenders are asked to describe what happened, then victims are invited to speak about their reactions at the time

of the incident and how it has affected them afterwards, including the difficulties they have experienced as a result of the incident.  Victim supporter speak next about their feelings and main issues resulting from the crime and then offender supporters are then asked to speak about their feelings (Baffour, 2006).

The study included an 18-month follow-up period to evaluate recidivism rates of participants in the FCG model.  The results were promising in that only 82 offenders or 28.1% had re-offended and 71.9% had not.  Those results are much lower than the national standard for juvenile re-offending rates, which is about 55% (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).  Overall, this model could be an effective intervention tool for shaping social work and criminology policy and practice.

**Reintegration Programs that Focus on Community Supports in Aftercare**

Reintegration programs need to recognize the multitude of problems that juvenile youth face on a systemic level when coming into the juvenile justice system and once leaving the system.  From a systems-ecological perspective, the juvenile ex-offender is affected by their experiences as an individual (micro), within the family unit (meso), and within their larger communities (macro).  They struggle with problems at home, school and their communities and often lack the individual, family or community supports (Anthony et al., 2010; Steinberg et al., 2004).

Within the research it is recognized that whether a juvenile re-offends cannot be the only indicator or success and research needs to be broadened to include a perspective on improving the elements of long-term community based services that are offered to

juvenile youth. Strategically, communities are best equipped to combat delinquent

behavior and tapping into their own resources and problem-solving capabilities. Some

initiatives that are emerging as new community tactics, often called "community justice"

initiatives, include community crime prevention, community policing, community

prosecution, and community courts (Mears & Travis, 2004). Since communities are

directly affected by the success or failure of released youth, they can use their resources

as leverage, place pressure on local law enforcement and help coordinate mental health,

justice, educational and social services to help combat crime and improve youth

engagement (Mears & Travis, 2004).

Other studies show that placing juvenile youth offenders in community-based

intervention programs that engage a variety of agents in the intervention process can help

change the systemic issues that often contribute to juvenile delinquency and crime by

addressing poverty and unemployment (Simmons, 2002; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).

Lastly, community partnerships can provide the opportunity for social workers or other

change agents to operate independently of large bureaucracies and be the connector of

services between existing organizations within communities. It is strongly suggested in

the literature that if community partnerships are to work effectively, social workers and

all change agents within the community must work together to develop resources for

recently released youth and their families. Sometimes criminal justice partnerships miss

the chance to advance community dialogue, instead focusing solely on crime prevention,

thus ignoring the structural roots of inequity in neighborhoods (Jurik, Blumenthal, Smith, & Portillos, 2000).

**Structural Inequities Within the Criminal Justice System**

The structural roots of inequity is a subject that cannot be ignored. The fact that there are enormous disparities of race, ethnicity and social class in the distribution of the confinement and that confined youth disproportionately come from and return to poor and minority communities (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004; Steinberg et al., 2004; Sullivan, 2004) is important to recognize so that community-based services can work to match services to its population. It is noted in the literature that ethnic minority youth, particularly Black males are overrepresented at every stage of the justice system process. As an example, Black youth make up 15% of the general youth population, yet they account for 46% of the near 109,000 adolescents, who are in residential placements within the juvenile justice system (Steinberg et al., 2004; Sullivan, 2004). In addition, Blacks represent 31% of arrests but only make up 12% of the general population (Sampson & Lauritsen as cited in Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004). White teenagers, on the other hand account for about 80% of the general population but only 40% of the adolescents in juvenile correctional facilities (Puzzanchera, Kang, Poole, & Wan, 2002; Sickmund, 2002; Snyder, 1999).

It is demonstrated by the research that the themes of race, ethnicity and social class are subjects to which adolescents are particularly sensitive (Spencer & Dornbusch, 1990; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). It is argued by Spencer and Jones-Walker

(2004) that programs that ignore race and ethnicity as important to identity formation are doing a major disservice to recently released youth. They argue that reintegration programs that address racial discrimination and how to develop a positive sense of self can play a critical role in the lives of young people.

> From a "normal human development" approach (i.e. rather than a pathology or problem-focused approach), we believe that the formation of an individual's identity is an important addition to the discussion of reentry and reintegration. An individual's self-conception provides a critical foundation for traversing various life challenges and contributes to the development of effective coping responses to life-course events. In fact exploring the links between a person's view of self and behaviors produced is of special relevance for minorities and impoverished people more generally given, as noted, their disproportionate placement in the criminal justice system and exposure to group stereotyping. (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004, p. 93)

As evidenced by qualitative research with this population, juvenile ex-offenders are aware of their race, ethnicity or social class as a potential disadvantage within their own communities (Cunningham & Spencer, 2000), therefore, interventions need to assist youth in identity formation and use methods of empowerment with youth and their families, enabling them to cope in their specific environment.

**Policy Implications & Implications for the Social Work Field**

This third section explores the policy implications for juvenile and young adult reintegration and later implications for the social work field. With the growing numbers of incarcerated youth and young adults in the U.S., the communities they return to are faced with the challenge of serving this population and aiding them in successful transitions focusing on educational attainment, vocational training, family reunification, peer relationships, substance abuse and mental health counseling (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Mears & Travis, 2004; Snyder, 1999). The unfortunate reality is that these same communities that ex-offender youth are returning to often have a structural disadvantage, plagued by poverty, homelessness, drug addiction, and crime (Mears & Travis 2004) thus lacking the social programs and resources needed to support them. Therefore the ability of these communities to offer integrated transitional services to increase the likelihood of successful reentry should be a critical policy and research goal.

The success or failure of reintegrating about 200,000 juveniles and young adults who are released from custody each year (Mears & Travis, 2004) lies with the ability of the criminal justice system to work with various community agencies to provide a rehabilitative path that begins while in corrections, upon release and with significant aftercare. The research suggests that reintegrated youth that have a seamless transition into community-based services through a continuum of care model have a much better chance of not recidivating as adults (Howell, Kelly, Palmer, & Magnum, 2004; Ryan, Davis, & Yang, 2001).

The literature also points to the impact that communities can make on youth development if collaboration efforts are successful in garnering community resources (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Anthony et al., 2010; Mears & Travis, 2004; Sullivan, 2004). Engaging community groups, family members, and juvenile justice agencies early on can clearly mobilize a given community's resources. It also provides the impetus for communities to provide the necessary connections to major providers of education, mental health, substance abuse, and child welfare services so that each returning youth can have better access to local services (Anthony et al., 2010; Mears & Travis, 2004). Aftercare programs need to be extensive and aim to follow release up to a full year (Abrams et al., 2008; Anthony et al., 2010; Mears & Travis, 2004; Sullivan, 2004). Overall, in order for juvenile ex-offenders to become productive healthy adults the literature implies that rehabilitative and treatment methods must be employed over punishment (Steinberg et al., 2004) and a coordinated service model for re-entry practice within communities needs to be researched and funded by policy makers (Anthony et al., 2010).

What does the growing reintegration problem mean for the social work field? This section of the review establishes the importance of merging research and policy goals of both the criminal justice and social work field, emphasizing the need for an integrative intervention model that can be used by parole officers, social workers, and other helping agencies. The section of the review also studies evidence-based practice and its role in providing a foundation for an intervention model that can be duplicated for

future transitional programs serving this population. If social workers are going to play a major role in the aftercare services for reintegrated youth then they need to have a larger understanding of the current services that are offered to paroled youth and what improvements can be made to those services to provide a better transition from corrections to community.

The best research on an integrative service delivery model came from a comprehensive strategy originally introduced by Wilson and Howell (1993) that aimed to serve the most serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders and integrate the varying components of a broadly defined juvenile justice system. The strategy included: prevention, services delivered by the juvenile justice system directly, other youth-serving systems and a continuum of intervention and graduated sanctions on youth linked with a rehabilitative treatment programs that were proved to be effective (Howell et al., 2004). The study was conducted with serious violent juvenile offenders, ages 12-21, with an evaluative design to identify best aftercare practices. As cited in the literature, this comprehensive strategy was designed to combine public and private services in an integrated model that would build on the strengths of child and family to reflect evidence-based practice (Howell et al., 2004).

Evidence-based practice is a newer model that the social work field is striving to incorporate into everyday practice and teach in schools of social work. It means that practitioners try to make their practice decisions based on the best research available, as

well as their clients' individual circumstances.  Wilson and Howell constructed their

strategy framework on five major principles, using evidence-based practice:

> (1) Strengthen the family in its primary responsibility to instill moral values and
>
> provide guidance and support to children; (2) support core social institutions,
>
> schools, religious institutions, and community organizations in developing
>
> capable, responsible youth; promote delinquency prevention as the most cost-
>
> effective approach to reducing juvenile delinquency; (3) intervene immediately
>
> and effectively when delinquent behavior occurs to successfully prevent offenders
>
> from becoming chronic offenders; and (4) identify and control the small group of
>
> serious, violent, chronic juvenile offenders who have committed felony offenses
>
> or have failed to respond to intervention and nonsecure community-based
>
> treatment and rehabilitative services.  (Wilson & Howell, 1993, pp. 9-10)

Collaboration from the juvenile justice system is imperative in order for this

comprehensive framework to be successful in producing a sound intervention.  Especially

since they play such a major role in making judicial determinations about removal of

children from home, involuntary receipt of mental health services and service

coordination (Howell et al., 2004).

It is also recommended by the literature that local communities take ownership

over programs and strategies and deepen grassroots community participation (Jurik et al.,

2000) so that each community can be held accountable for its own program and stand on

its own two feet.  Although there is clear connections between the criminal justice and

social work fields of research, there needs to a more narrowed focus on integrative

models for practice that both disciplines can access to assist the juvenile ex-offender

population. If both disciplines operate independently from one another then this

population's cycle back into the juvenile or adult justice system will continue inevitably,

and there will be a sustained lack of community participation in the process of reentry.

### Gaps in the Literature

The major gaps in the literature are findings on integrative models for the social

work and criminal justice fields, evidenced by only the one or two articles found on the

subject. In addition, there are few qualitative studies offering the youth perspective on

the process of reentry. There also seem to be limitations on research profiling the

national adjudicated youth population, as more studies have been conducted on a regional

scale. For example, there were two major longitudinal studies conducted by (Bullis &

Yovanoff, 2002, 2006) that profiled 531 incarcerated youth from Oregon's juvenile

justice system. They did attempt to gain a more critical understanding on the youth

perspective of reentry but even through their follow-up study, only provided information

on what types of services male and female offenders received and which were more

likely to be engaged in educational or employment pursuits. Their research efforts did

find that facility-based services did have an impact on their sample's recidivism rates.

Their research calls for additional research analyzing the effect of community-

based services on community adjustment for juvenile ex-offenders. Finally, many studies

emphasize community-based involvement in after-care or suggest a continuum of care

upon release (Abrams et al., 2008; Mears & Travis, 2004; Sullivan, 2004) but do not

offer detailed models for practice.  Recommendations for future research include

continued qualitative studies evaluating the reentry experience for juveniles, continued

research on transitional programming and aftercare services for youth and their families

and program evaluations or case studies on effective models.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

**Study Design**

The study design for this thesis project was a mixed methods study. It included

an exploration of the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice, through a case study on the

model. The case study examined current data in the form of a report through a secondary

data analysis and through two qualitative interviews. The findings added to the literature

on this particular program and increased awareness of alternative interventions for youth

involved in corrections. The unit of analysis was a program called the Missouri Model of

Juvenile Justice administered by the Division of Youth Services of Missouri.

The secondary data analysis section of the study did not require permission as the

information was considered public and could be found online. The other data was

collected through a one-time qualitative phone interview of mostly open-ended questions.

Permission was obtained through a written consent form for the interviews (see Appendix

A). The sampling design was a case study and the sample size was one program and two

individual participants. The data analysis approach was descriptive in nature and the use

of direct quotes was used for the qualitative interviews.

**Data Collection Instruments**

The data was collected primarily through the participants answering a set of

interview questions developed by the researcher (see Appendix B). There were 14

interview questions but the data was not limited to those questions, as the interview also

included other input from participants, describing the program. An audiocassette

recorder was used to record interviews. In addition to recording the interviews, the

researcher took detailed case notes during the interviews. The notes taken by the

researcher assisted in providing supplemental information to the direct quotes. The

results of the interview were then transcribed by the researcher and then the tape was

destroyed. There was no other equipment or instruments necessary for data collection.

For the secondary data analysis, the findings were collected by summarizing major

arguments and presenting key findings in the report. In addition, the transcription of the

interviews were divided and organized into the key sections outlined in the secondary

data analysis as to be consistent with the other findings.

### Subjects' Risk and Rights to Privacy

The researcher considered this study to be no risk to its participants. It was

considered no risk because the participants were simply providing information on a

program they are involved in and the questions asked do not pertain to individual matters

or bring up sensitive material. The intent of their interviews was to obtain information

from inside sources on the program and evaluate different aspects of the program. The

subjects' right to privacy was considered by ensuring that the answers to their interview

questions will be kept confidential. The participants of the study were provided informed

consent forms prior to the interviews and those were signed and delivered back to the

researcher. In the informed consent document, potential interviewees were informed of

the voluntary nature of their participation and the opportunity to withdraw from participation at any point within the study.

## Protection of Human Subjects

The protocol for the protection of human subjects was submitted in February and was approved by the Division of Social Work's Human Subjects Committee. All appropriate attachments were submitted. These included a letter of permission from the Division of Youth Services of Missouri, stating their approval of the researcher's intent to conduct phone interviews with their staff and permission to obtain data from the agency (see Appendix C). The letters of consent for all participants were included and the set of interview questions were submitted for approval, as well.

## Qualitative Phone Interview Participants

The interview participants were chosen to participate in this research based on their intimate knowledge of the program model being studied. The two staff members, Tim Decker, Director of the Division of Youth Services of Missouri (see Appendix D for biography) and Dennis Gragg, Assistant Deputy Director of the Division of Youth Services of Missouri (see Appendix E for biography) are in the highest positions within the division. The interviews were conducted based on a set of fourteen interview questions that guided the course of the interviews. The objective of using the interview questions was to structure the interviews in a way that would allow for a range of qualitative data but also covering key areas of inquiry. The main categories of information collected described the history or background of the Juvenile Justice

program, the philosophy, mission and values of the program, implementation of the program, key characteristics of the program that determined its positive results, program structure and outcome data of the program. The information collected through the interviews were presented in the case study as primarily direct quotes and cited only through the use of each participant's last name to differentiate the opinions of each participant. The interviews did not last longer than an hour each; the information collected was then transcribed by the researcher and then destroyed.

### Secondary Data Analysis

The secondary data analysis was the primary source of data for this mixed methods study. The researcher did a case study on the model by examining a report published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, entitled *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youthful Offenders.* This report was published by Richard Mendel in 2010 and stands to be the most up to date information on this model of practice in juvenile corrections. The information in the report was from one source so therefore there were no citations used in the text, assuming all facts were extracted from Mendel's report.

The secondary data analysis included a summary of the entire program, including its particular components that attributed to its success in reducing recidivism. It also included interventions that could be used for practice in other states and recommendations for policy changes that could assist juvenile ex-offenders. The case study was analyzed by a framework that covered five major areas of study. The first was

the history of juvenile corrections in Missouri before the current model was adopted. The

second was developing an understanding of the mission, philosophy and values that

underlined this model. The third component was examining the necessary staffing and

training for the program. The fourth highlighted the key components that contributed to

the model's success, including a subsection on the cost of the program on the state

budget. The final component was outlining the structure of the program model. The

research case study concluded with an analysis that included outcome data and statistics

on the impact on recidivism rates in comparison to other models used in different states.

The research aimed to add to the social work literature intended to help this

population. The research also hoped to provide an opportunity for professionals in both

the criminal justice and social work field to expand their knowledge on an effective

program for juveniles. The case study component identified a practice model that could

be duplicated by other professionals in the social work, criminal justice and social service

fields.

**Conclusion**

The methodology selected for this research was appropriate in its ability to

provide a larger perspective on an intervention model for practice. By including a

secondary data analysis highlighting the successes of a particular program and by

interviewing staff who could provide insider information on the program the research

provided a range of approaches to improve reentry programs and work towards reducing

recidivism for juvenile ex-offenders.  The research aimed to increase attention to this

important issue in social work practice and research.

Chapter 4

DATA COLLECTION

In this chapter the researcher will incorporate two types of data collection into a

one case study.  The case study is on the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice.  The first

type of data introduced is a secondary data analysis on the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Report entitled, *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youthful*

*Offenders* (Mendel, 2010).  The second section of data collection will include data

obtained from two individual qualitative interview sessions with staff members of the

Division of Youth Services (DYS) of Missouri.  Both forms of data collection were

chosen by the researcher to provide detailed and inclusive information on the unit of

analysis, the program.  The researcher hopes to provide insider insight into a program

model that can be duplicated by other state agencies in corrections and social service

agencies.  The research studied intends to contribute to social work research on reentry

and provide an effective alternative to current practice models that have struggled with

the juvenile offender population and reducing its recidivism rates.  The research

accomplishes this goal by describing a program model in full detail that can be modified

and put into practice by other criminal justice and social work professionals.

The purpose of using the case study design is to demonstrate the effectiveness of

one particular program in reducing recidivism rates.  By using the approach of examining

the Missouri model in more depth and defining the characteristics that are most effective,

the researcher hopes to provide recommendations for service-oriented fields that are

invested in the successful transition of juveniles back into the community.  In addition, the case study model will allow for a more in-depth examination of the critical components that contribute to the model's success and provide interventions for policy and practice.  The researcher is particularly interested in highlighting the importance of aftercare in the Missouri Model, as it was stated in the general literature review as one of the most important factors in successful reentry.

### Case Study

The case study is examining the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice.  The lens in which the researcher will view the case study is through a secondary data analysis on a report published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, entitled *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youthful Offenders* (Mendel, 2010) and through qualitative interviews with program staff.  The report was published in 2010, authored by Richard Mendel, and provides up-to-date information on the program.

The two qualitative interviews are with senior staff from the Division of Youth Services of Missouri.  The first interviewee is with Tim Decker the current Director of the Division of Youth Services of Missouri.  Tim Decker has over 26 years of experience and has served in a variety of leadership positions with the Missouri Department of Social Services and the Greater Kansas City Local Investment Commission (LINC); one of Missouri's innovative public/private community partnerships focused on citizen engagement, local governance, natural helping networks, and neighborhood-based services.  He has served in his current role as Director of the Division of Youth Services

of Missouri since 2006. Before taking on his current role, he served as a program

manager and administrator with the Division of Youth Services from 1984-1993. During

this time, the agency was engaged in major system transformation toward more humane,

therapeutic, developmental, and effective approaches to juvenile justice. During that time

Tim managed programs in Missouri's continuum of care, serving as the Northwest

Region's Assistant Regional Administrator. In addition, Tim was certified as a national

trainer by the Families and Schools Together from 1999-2007, exemplary model

prevention program with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice &

Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). He earned his degree in Social Work and Psychology

in 1982 from Park University in Parkville, Missouri and completed the Institute for

Education Leadership Education Policy Fellowship Program in 2007. Overall, Tim has

spent over 30 years working with the juvenile population in varying capacities and is a

frequent presenter on topics like juvenile justice reform and results-based accountability.

A full description of Tim Decker's professional and educational background can be found

in Appendix D.

Dennis Gragg, Assistant Deputy Director of the Division of Youth Services of

Missouri, has over 35 years of experience in the criminal justice field. In his current role

he directs Missouri's juvenile corrections agency in its provision of a comprehensive

education program serving approximately 2400 delinquent and at-risk youth per year.

Over the past 10 years in this role he has also provided administration organization for

the state's Juvenile Court Diversion Program and monitored legislative activity that may

have an impact on DYS youth. He supervises three deputy directors and also is in charge

of overseeing the Education Director of DYS. Prior to his current role he served as the

Education Director for the DYS, where he directed the coordination, evaluation and

technical direction of the Division's academic, special education and vocational programs

and curriculum. In the 17 years prior to becoming an administrator Dennis worked

primarily as an educator in two DYS correctional facilities; W.E. Sears Youth Center and

the Training School for Boys. He also worked as a Placement Center Coordinator in the

Boonville Correctional Center. He completed his bachelor's degree in Education in 1976,

from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He then completed his Masters in Education,

specializing in Adult Education Administration in 1981, and continued his graduate

studies in Secondary School Administration at the University of Missouri-Columbia. A

full description of Dennis Gragg's professional and educational background can be found

in Appendix E.

The case study has five major areas of analysis: history of the program and how it

reached national success; philosophy, mission and beliefs; staffing and training; program

components (including its results), and the structure of the program. The case study will

also analyze the outcome statistics on recidivism rates and its comparison to other states

and that will be covered in the program component section. Finally, the case study will

incorporate the qualitative interview commentary into the five stated sections as direct

quotes and supplemental information to solidify the findings in the report.

**History**

According to the Casey report, the history of Missouri's juvenile corrections system is colored with severe and inhumane conditions. At its primary corrections institution for boys, the Boonville Training School, the conditions were seen as problematic for youth. Until its closure in 1983, Boonville was cited for many abuses. An article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* indicated that boys were subject to beatings and three boys died in the facility in 1948 alone. During the 1950s legislation was passed, under a law entitled Unified Juvenile Court Act that attempted to address conditions in Missouri's facilities by recognizing that centers should be focused on treatment, instead of punishment. Despite that legislation, in the 1960s the facility was condemned for its penal military atmosphere, particularly the practice of banishing unruly youth to the Hole—a dark, solitary confinement room atop the facility's administration building. The training school did not focus on rehabilitation and according to Tim Decker,

> *Missouri was not different from other states. We were using the large training school model, three to six hundred youth on a campus. It was not until the 1970s when the agency decided that this was not working very well for us. At one time Boonville was labeled as one of the worst facilities in the country. Like many facilities now (Boonville) was investigated by state and federal officials and the leaders decided we want something better for our kids.*

It was then they began to add therapeutic elements and began to experiment with smaller correctional programs with extended aftercare programs. For example, the W.E. Sears

Youth Center in 1970 was opened as an expansion of smaller non-institutional environments for youth.

In 1974 the Division of Youth Services was adopted into the Division of Social Services and the group treatment approach was adopted as the primary treatment modality. In 1975, DYS adopted a five year plan to reorganize the division by closing all of its training schools, expanding community-based services, delinquency prevention programs, focusing on staff development and training, improving the quality of programs, providing better education for youth and doing effective research and evaluation of programs. In that same year, the Department of Elementary Education authorized DYS to become accredited as its own school district and to set educational standards for its youth populations. They also closed the training school for girls in Chilocothe in 1981 and began building and outfitting smaller sites across the state to house delinquent teens. The largest of these units only housed 36 teens and group treatment became the core of its rehabilitative focus. On the impact of smaller facilities, Dennis Gragg states,

> *It provided the opportunity for better innovation and where we are today evolved from a lot of people wanting to try a bunch of different things. One of the most common things that was said is that we need to treat these kids as our own and provide them with what we'd want our kids, but remember they belong to someone else. That became a guiding theme for a long time.*

The smaller facilities paved the way for major changes in the system.

These were just the beginning stages of reform for Missouri's juvenile corrections. The process has advanced significantly since 1983 with the closure of the Boonville facility. The Division of Youth Services, along with political leadership in the state has continued to improve its focus on rehabilitative services. The turning point for juvenile corrections was reached by simply looking at the outcome evaluation research on the effects of large prison like incarceration on youth. Decker comments, "*We recognized that the large programs needed to go. It was hard to avoid the warehousing effect. It was hard to create the culture and therapeutic development in those large campuses.*" Nationally many youth are confined in these types of institutions and recidivism rates remain high. Violence and abuse in these types of facilities is rampant and the costs of this correction model is higher not only to tax payers but in long term impacts on confined youth. For those reasons the Missouri approach shifted its efforts on two fundamentally different, yet complimentary approaches in dealing with the juvenile offender population.

The first is to substantially reduce the population confined in juvenile correctional institutions by screening out youth who pose minimum dangers to the public and placing them instead into cost-effective and research and community-based rehabilitative programs. This was accomplished by the Juvenile Court Diversion program, established in 1980. With the success of this program, Decker reports, "*We divert 2,500 kids a year and get about 1,100 committed.*" A number of states have followed suit, (including Alabama, California, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas) in order to

systematically reduce their confined populations.  This strategy is an effective way to focus efforts only on those chronic and serious offenders who must be removed from the community to protect public safety.

The second approach, devised primarily from the Division of Youth Services of Missouri, is to rid the state of prison like correctional institutions in favor of smaller, regionally dispersed facilities.  Decker says,

> *The smaller facilities were more humane and we could implement the group approach in an effective way.  Along the way there was a fundamental shift in philosophy from the correctional mentality to more of a strengths based approach that began to shape how staff began to look at youth and their families.  It began to shift from looking at bad kids inappropriate behavior in an effort to meet their own needs.*

The reasons for this approach will be further outlined and detailed in the program component section of this analysis.  However, the initial reason for this approach was designed to allow staff to implement a multi-layered treatment experience that would challenge troubled teens behaviors' and help them make lasting changes that would prepare them for successful transitions back into society.  After all, as Decker states, "*We believe that all young people want to do well and succeed,*" and this mentality shift evolved over time to create the system culture that now gives DYS its recognition and success.

In 2001, the American Youth Policy Center identified Missouri's program as a "guiding light" for reform in juvenile justice. In addition, since that time 30 states have visited for a tour of Missouri's youth corrections facilities and have been amazed at the civility, confidence and openness of the young people they meet. Both Gragg and Decker confirmed the report's findings based on their own perspectives of those visits. Gragg comments,

> *I think when people come and visit our programs they are surprised by what they see. It is a very humane homey type of environment and the question often will be, well, where do you keep the bad kids? The kids that are here and the things they have done are bad. We do have kids who have caused extensive harm in their communities, half of the kids we have are felony offenders. It is their attitude that surprises people.*

Decker agrees when he says, "*It's not that the kids are different in Missouri, it is that the program is different. It teaches other systems to look internally at what changes can be made.*" In 2007, the Missouri model was given more national accolades when they were featured on National Public Radio, in the New York Times and the Associated Press ran an article on its success as a juvenile corrections model. In 2008, the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government Missouri Division of Youth Services winner of its prestigious "Innovations in American Government" award in children and family system reform.

Lastly, in 2009 the ABC television network featured the system model on its news program *Primetime.* The recognition has greatly enhanced the opportunity for other states to reexamine their current systems and adopt similar approaches and changes to their respective juvenile justice systems. Gragg believes that by developing community liaison councils in the 1990s, where youth are partnered with people in communities to help kids achieve great outcomes, DYS has been recognized as resource in the community instead of something to be hidden. Along with all the other positive outcomes, including the lowest recidivism rates in the country, the Division of Youth Services (DYS) has become substantiated within in its own state, which is a law and order state, demonstrating to its political leaders and citizens that their approach is an effective way to deal with the juvenile offender population.

**Philosophy, Mission, and Beliefs**

The Division of Youth Services of Missouri recognizes that their practices and techniques are completely driven by their mission. Their mission statement is: to help youth in custody make positive, lasting changes that lead them away from criminality and toward success. The mission statement follows along with some of their core beliefs that drive the programmatic work they do each day. Those three beliefs are: (a) that all people—including delinquent youth—desire to do well and succeed; (b) that with the right kind of help, all youth can (and most will) make lasting behavioral changes and succeed; and (c) that the mission of youth corrections must be to provide the right kinds of help, consistent with public safety, so that young people make needed changes and

move on to successful and law-abiding adult lives.  These core beliefs guide the

philosophy that every youth wants to and can succeed.  The therapeutic interventions

provided by the program are the instruments that enable the youth to make the necessary

changes that will lead to their success.

The philosophy of the Division of Youth Services impacts its approach to youth.

The root of DYS's philosophy is all youth hunger for approval, acceptance and

achievement.  The agency believes it has a responsibility to protect society from youth

who would commit crimes and cause harm but it believes that public safety is best

achieved not by shaming techniques and punishment but rather by therapeutic

interventions that will lead to lasting behavioral changes.  Gragg elaborates on the major

differences in their therapeutic approach;

*It is much more about building the relationship and problem solving.  We look to*

*try to develop kids with skills, education, with a sense of belonging.  We try to*

*build the strengths instead of looking at it from a deficits approach.*

Through years of experience DYS has realized that those changes cannot be imposed on

young people.  Young people cannot become scared straight or reformed through

military-style techniques.

Gragg believes that because of their accepting approach and lettings kids know

they may have a problem but they are not the problem themselves, it helps kids leave

with a better sense of empowerment and the power to make good decisions.  He says,

"*They hopefully see themselves not as victims, but have control over their own destiny*

*and I think that is huge.*" They have learned that change can only result from internal choices made by the young people themselves; the choices that lead youth to adopt more positive behaviors, seek out positive peer support and embrace positive goals for their lives. These changes do not come easy but DYS implements a philosophy of understanding and developing positive relationships with youth. By demonstrating that the staff care about them as individuals and expect them to succeed, youth learn they have someone behind them and this helps them engage in treatment.

Another tenet of DYS's philosophy is that youth must be treated with patience, acceptance and respect by staff members and other youth participants. Decker comments that one of the major differences in the Missouri approach is simply how they label youth and staff. For example, they call staff service coordinators, rather than correctional officers and label youth "*young people or youth in our system whereas they may be called inmates in other systems*." The staff try their best to make the facilities a non-blaming environment and provide a safe, nurturing space for youth to grow and make some of these changes. In addition the staff remains aware that every young person who enters their facilities are unique and bring along with them their own set of unique circumstances. With this in mind, treatment must be individualized because each person will choose to make decisions to change or not to based on their individual backgrounds. DYS recognizes that some youth's delinquency is rooted in former abuse, neglect or trauma and for others it may have developed by adolescent thrill-seeking behaviors, clouded judgment due to substance abuse, gang involvement or the lure of fast money

through drug dealing or other criminal activity. DYS adopts a flexible attitude in working with youth and tries its best to provide individual attention to contribute to each youth's success.

Another central tenet of the Missouri approach is that whatever the root of the behavior, the youth typically share an inability to have insight into their own emotions. They may be unable to distinguish between feelings and facts, perception and reality, along with an underdeveloped capacity to communicate their feelings clearly and express disagreement or anger responsibly. Recognizing this inability staff do not judge the emotions expressed by young people in treatment and if youth misbehave they do not punish them with isolation but instead challenge their behaviors with probing questions that help the youth understand the root of their behavior and help identify constructive responses. They also as Decker comments,

> *Establish safety first and foremost through positive unconditional regard for the young people, meeting their basic needs, physical and emotional being really important, belonging, family engagement and real basic expectations that create a culture around how to treat one another with dignity and respect.*

This understanding and respectful attitude guides the treatment process and helps make positive changes in youths' behavior.

Before the change process can begin it is important to know some of the deficits of this population. DYS acknowledges that most of youth in custody suffer from low confidence in education and future work prospects. Many are years behind in math,

reading and writing.  Many of these youth disproportionately come from families that are

troubled by poverty, addiction and or abandonment or from communities that have

pervasive crime and so therefore youth lack positive adult role models.  DYS believes

that by enabling youth to have success in the classroom and by developing positive

relationships with staff and other adults, these practices will provide the impetus for them

to embrace healthier lifestyles and behavior.  Staff work as adult role models for youth

while they are in the facility but believe that repairing relationships with parents and

other adult family members is instrumental to a youth's long term success once returned

to their community.  The focus on this part of treatment will be further defined in the

program component section of this analysis.

Before the treatment process can begin, DYS focuses its energy on ensuring the

emotional and physical safety of all youth involved in the program.  The staff

understands that treatment will be counterproductive if youth still feel intimidated or

overwhelmed or fear excessive force or isolation.  One thing that differentiates the

Missouri program from other correctional institutions in other states is they don't use

coercive practices such as razor wire, isolation cells, uniformed armed guards with

handcuffs and pepper spray.  They focus instead on relationship-based approaches where

they aim to build strong positive connections with the youth and develop a nurturing

atmosphere for group treatment.

The small group treatment design includes a stable staff team and team leader

with a small group of youth participants.  The staff believes it is that intimacy that

ensures youth will be more likely to share in group. They help solidify this intimacy by keeping the treatment group as close as possible. Gragg says for example, "*As a treatment group they do treatment together, they play together, they eat together, go to school together, and sleep in the same dormitory together. They are always moving from place to place as a treatment group.*" Their major philosophy for small group treatment is that change does not occur in isolation.

In addition, they understand that peers take on an enormous importance during adolescence, so by allowing youth to interact with their peers in a supervised environment, they foster healthy communication and relationship development. The DYS program values staffs' caring supervision of individual youth and also value the importance of possessing facilitation skills in working with youth. They have a fully engaged supervision process. Gragg describes their philosophy as,

> *Eyes on, ears on and hearts on…those employees know those kids very well. They know their triggers, they know the types of interventions that need to be done to deescalate, they know when something is just not right because they learn to recognize those things over the time working with them.*

This closeness creates a more helping agent philosophy over a control agent one used in traditional juvenile correctional models. The small group treatment process will be further outlined in the program structure section.

During the self-discovery that occurs during treatment, the DYS mission is demonstrated through individual goals for each youth participant. For example, the

treatment focuses on: (a) identifying the emotional triggers that typically lead them to act out and lose emotional control and the touchy topics that cause them to clam up, or act out, when they're discussed; (b) examine how current behaviors are connected to past experiences, and especially to dynamics within their own homes and families; and (c) develop the capacity to express their emotions clearly, calmly, and respectfully, even negative emotions like anger and fear. The mission is carried out by helping youth make the lasting changes to their behavior that will lead to their success once back into their respective communities.

The Division of Youth Services also adopts a set of beliefs about their facilities and the environment created for the youth. This set of beliefs is deeply connected to their mission and overall philosophy. The decision to build a regional network of smaller institutions was done with the purpose in mind to provide more individualized care and to create an environment less like large-scale adult prisons. The facilities are appointed with comfortable home furnishings like carpet, couches and bunk beds that give the feel of a school dormitory more than a prison. In Missouri the youth wear their own clothes and get to decorate their rooms with their own personal belongings. Overall, the Missouri facilities are designed to normalize the treatment experience for youth, based on a belief that if you treat youth less like a criminal, they will behave less like a criminal.

The focus on treatment also permeates all aspects of the facility, including all staff members. For example, in the hiring process, DYS prioritizes selecting even cooks, secretaries, and groundskeepers with a treatment background. The belief that all staff

must integrate the agency mission in each interaction with youth is very important. Staff also must be culturally competent in working with all populations and the staff is diverse in terms of race, gender and ethnicity to match with clients. There is also a belief that the facilities should make connections to the outside community. The DYS has teamed up with local businesses, churches and community centers to connect youth to community service. Decker comments on the benefit of this approach, "*We also engage the community so the changes they make in the facility will translate to out in the community.*" They believe that creating these connections during confinement is important so that youth recognize the value of service and develop a sense of themselves as contributors to a larger society. An example of some of the community connections include doing maintenance work in state parks and training rescue dogs from the local animal shelter.

Lastly, there is a belief that youth are responsible for maintaining the facilities and participating in chores. Each youth rotates facility chores and assists staff in keeping the facility clean and orderly. This principle teaches youth independence, responsibility, and cooperation.

The philosophy, mission and values of the Missouri program differentiate it from other large-scale juvenile correction institutions. The mission permeates through the program facilities and staff. The values that DYS holds create an environment of mutual respect that assists youth in developing positive relationships and in making lasting changes in their lives.

**Staffing and Training**

The Missouri approach in many ways goes against the grain of tough on crime political orthodoxy in the state and for this reason it is important to DYS to deliver impeccable staff and training in their facilities.  First and foremost, the agency only hires entry-level workers that they have determined as demonstrating a capacity for exercising the mission and treatment philosophy of the agency.  Along with careful hiring decisions, DYS offers intensive ongoing training for its staff.  Administration staff must have experience working directly with youth within the DYS system and a deep appreciation of the model.  When asked about the impacts of their staffing model, Decker added,

> *We invest in our frontline staff being the primary treatment providers and then we can supplement for special issues.  For instance, our staff receive up to 230 hours of training over two years.  They learn the group process, understanding the youth's needs and core issues, family systems, crisis intervention and facilitating change.*

Staffing the agency with such careful selection allows the agency to operate with less fear that abuses are happening and more assurance that youth have an individualized experience with staff.

The search for motivated staff begins with taking on student interns across the state as part-time community mentors.  This allows the agency to assess students' commitments to the agency mission and pick top candidates to stay on as full-time staff upon completions of their college careers.  The opportunities for advancement begin at

the early stages and staff can be promoted from youth specialists to team leaders, facility

managers or assistance managers, service coordinators or eventually, family therapists.

The opportunity for advancement provides an avenue for staff to stay committed to the

organization, despite lower pay than most other state correctional workers receive in

those settings.

The decentralized nature of the program also emphasizes a decentralized

administrative structure.  Including clerical staff, fewer than 25 of the more than 1,400

DYS workers are based in the Division's central office located in Jefferson City, MO.  All

five have a full continuum of care that includes a day center, group home and secure

facility.  All five regional facilities are given freedom to adopt the model and alter it to

local conditions, as long as all strategies are consistent with the core belief system.  The

philosophy in keeping with do "whatever it takes" to help youth succeed, DYS

encourages creative treatment methodologies and innovative approaches in working with

youth.

Division of Youth Services is also invested in finding staff who are willing to

have constant supervision of youth, but not in a threatening way, instead demonstrating

the care and dedication to each youth participant.  The staff must have good knowledge

of the group process and have their eyes and ears alert to emerging problems, tensions

and conflicts that may arise within the group.  They must possess good facilitation skills

and use every conflict as an opportunity to develop youth's progress in maturity and self-

discovery.  The constant supervision assists in keeping youth on track with their goals.

Gragg adds, "*Because kids are never out of the site of adults, there is very little opportunity for kids to get into trouble.*"

It is important for staff to recognize faults in the current system and work on improvements. For example, when some of the DYS staff noticed that very few parents could attend Sunday visiting sessions with youth they reached out to the parents and realized that many of them worked on Sundays. From there, they changed their policy to allow daily visits. When staff became concerned with how daily treatment sessions were not being run well, they developed a new training and certification programs for all group leaders statewide. Staff also developed solutions for parents to solve transportation problems in getting to family therapy sessions. When staff noticed missed chances to place youth in jobs or schools upon release, they formulated a performance measure for tracking youth performance in school and/or employment after release. Staff usually create a team to look into issues and diagnose weaknesses and look for ways to improve service delivery. The emphasis placed on improving service delivery is admirable and is one of the components that could be duplicated by other agencies.

One major benefit of their staffing model is that service coordinators are assigned individually to kids and not to the facilities themselves. This helps keep the staff to youth ratio lower. Gragg comments,

> *We have 1,400-1,600 kids each day and we have 80 case coordinators. So the caseload is about 20 but some youth are in community care, facility care or aftercare. They (the staff) are based regionally so they are well-informed about*

*the community climate  that kids are coming from and where they are going back*

*to.*

 Decker echoes Gragg's statement:

*There is a huge value of having a single service coordinator that works with the*

*young person and family throughout their time with us.  A lot of systems have one*

*probation officer at the front end, they'll have an institutional case manager while*

*the youth is in custody and then have a parole officer at the other end.  The*

*agencies that handle the youth's case many be different in some cases and you*

*don't have that in Missouri.*

This approach helps staff form a better long-term relationship with youth.

Staff investment in youth success after they are released is also emphasized by the

program.  To maximize youth development in communities, staff reach out employers,

civic organizations, local governments and community residents to employ youth in

activities while they are in the program.  The youth lead tours to community residents to

demonstrate their mission to the community.  Often community residents are impressed

by the youths' confidence and this helps remove the stigma often associated with building

a facility in a neighborhood.  The community involvement piece lessens that "not in my

backyard" mentality often taken by community residents.

The training provided by DYS emphasizes family systems and family

engagement. They also employ a large group of family therapists for the group treatment

process.  It is also common for many of the mental health specialists to have started as

youth specialists.  The family engagement component of treatment will be more

thoroughly outlined in the program structure section.  Overall, the training for DYS staff

is extensive and on-going and each staff member is committed to the agency mission.

**Program Components and Results**

The first major program component outlined in the Mendel article is the reduction

of recidivism rates. The Missouri approach is invested in the success of every youth

exiting the system, therefore the investment in reducing recidivism rates is high.  Even

the way they look at these rates is somewhat different in that, "*Even with our outcomes*

*we look at kids' completion outcomes. So instead of looking at recidivism rates we look at*

*law-abiding rates,*" says Decker.  The juvenile justice field has committed years of

research on learning how to reduce recidivism with few positive results (Steinberg et al.,

2004).  Reducing recidivism can largely impact state budgets spent on corrections and

can impact the make-up of our future society.  The literature indicates that steering just

one high risk delinquent away from a life of crime saves society $3 million to $6 million

in reduced victim costs and criminal justice expenses, plus increased wages and tax

payments over the young person's lifetime.  Missouri's approach addresses the concerns

of citizens in regards to costs to taxpayers and delivers a program that reduces recidivism

in its youthful offenders.

Recidivism as a term is difficult to define even in the realm of this field of

research.  In this case study, the rates of recidivism are examined by: (a) looking at what

percentage of youth returned to adult prison within three years of release from

confinement in a juvenile facility; (b) percentage of youth committed to adult prison after two year release from confinement in a juvenile facility; (c ) what percentage were committed back into the Division of Youth Services custody or adult prison within one year of release; (d) how many youth returned after breaking parole and (e) how many left the system and were successful in pursuing normal, healthy lives. In all of these categories, Missouri ranks higher than other states in the study. For example, the rates of recidivism when studying the percentage of youth returned to adult prison after three years out of juvenile facilities was 23.4% for Arizona, 20.8% for Indiana and 26% for Maryland. By contrast, in Missouri, only 8.5% of youth released from the DYS in 2005 were placed back into adult prison or 120-day adult correctional program within three years. Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice reported 28% of its youth returned to adult prison or probation within one year of release from a juvenile facility, whereas Missouri's rate is 17.1%. In Michigan 10% of youth were recommitted to an adult or juvenile facility within two years and the two-year adult incarceration rate in Missouri was 7%.

Overall, the outcomes from Missouri youth discharged from DYS in 2005: only 5.5% were recommitted to DYS (without adult prison or parole), 20.6% were put on adult probation, 8.5% entered adult prison or 120-day correctional program, and 65.4% were law-abiding individuals. These rates indicate a huge success for the Missouri Model's impact on recidivism, in comparison to the national rate of recidivism for juveniles, which is 55% rearrested within one year (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006) and up to 76% in

some urban areas (Calvin, 2004). The program's low recidivism rates is a testament to its effectiveness.

In the Mendel article, the author addresses the skepticism that some states have when examining Missouri's results. One common fact that other states cite is that nearly half of the youth in the DYS population do not have a felony as their committing offense. A closer analysis indicates that Missouri's lower recidivism rates are not a byproduct of having a less serious offending population, for example, many youth before being committed for misdemeanors or status offenses, had felony histories. In the literature it mentions that 712 of the 1,120 youth released from DYS custody in 2005, or (64%) had a felony adjudication on their records. This grouping was nearly as successful as other less offending youth as keeping away from deep involvement in the criminal justice system. Sixty-three percent in comparison to their non-felony offender counterparts at 68.6% were able to avoid the criminal justice system for the next three years. This fact indicates that overall youth from DYS are still more successful than youth in other states, regardless of their felony or non-felony histories.

During the qualitative interviews I asked both participants on their perspectives of what major intervention factors contributed to Missouri's recidivism rates reaching 8.5% for juveniles sentenced to adult prison within three years. Both emphasized the importance in aftercare, as a key component in the success of keeping their youth from re-offending. Gragg states:

*If you can have some impact on the system you are returning them to then you are*

*going to improve your outcomes. We are able to develop plans that are going to*

*plan for their reintegration back into school, try to get some jobs lined up for*

*them, to work on belongingness and getting the continuation of the types of*

*services they may need to be successful, whether it's substance abuse counseling*

*or family therapy. You don't just stop these things when they walk out of*

*residential care. Some of these things need to continue, that is really important.*

*In coming up with a goal of reducing recidivism rates we realized that there*

*wasn't a heck of a lot we could do within our residential facilities. If we are*

*going to impact recidivism it is going to be in the aftercare.*

Decker took a different take on the impact of aftercare and stressed the importance of education completion for youth, in keeping recidivism rates low. He says, "*I think education plays a significant role. "In the last 15 years or so we've emphasized education in a significant way to improve completion rates. Our rates are about 38% vs. 11% nationally. So our completion rates are about three times the national average.*" Aftercare was mentioned in the general juvenile justice literature on reentry as the most influential component to successful transitions back into communities. It is clear from this case study that the emphasis on aftercare truly makes a huge difference in Missouri's ability to keep their youth from returning to the juvenile justice system.

In addition, Gragg offered up his perspective on the importance of developing youths' interpersonal skills and self-esteem.

*We have to help the kids to be prepared to be contributors to their families and communities, rather than just takers.  We have to help these young people develop a self-esteem, a sense of confidence, an awareness of their own strengths, and they need to be able to define themselves by their strengths and not their weaknesses.  They need to feel they have a fulfilled life and they are not draining the community of its resources by being dependent on them.  I think if you can accomplish those things you are going to have a person that is productive, happy, contributing and someone you'd like to have as your neighbor.*

It is clear from Gragg's comments that youth empowerment is a program goal in DYS and this is clear departure from correctional models in other states.

Another major program component contributing to the Missouri Model's success is their emphasis on safety within their juvenile facilities.  Similar to youth corrections in other states, Missouri is required to file a critical incident report whenever a young person is injured, restrained, held in isolation or whenever a youth attacks another youth or staff member.  In 2006, Ohio corrections released a report comparing their juvenile system with Missouri's and it was found that Ohio recorded more than four times as many youth-on youth assaults, seven times youth on staff assaults, and 41 sexual assaults versus Missouri's two sexual assaults.  In addition, this report also indicated the use of mechanical restraint, suffering physical damage or theft and isolation all to be higher within Ohio's correctional system.  Decker attributes their impeccable safety record to the non-controlling environment within the facilities. He says, "*With less coercion, less*

*threat, staff and kids are regularly controlled and it actually feels like a strange ironic*

*result in that it is actually safer.*" Missouri's safety record also stood out in comparison

to 97 other facilities that participated in the Council of Juvenile Correctional

Administrators' Performance-based Standards (PbS) project, which was a mix of above-

average facilities seeking to address safety issues and improve their respective safety

records. In the date compiled from that report in 2008, assaults against youth are four

and half times as common per capita in participating PbS facilities as in Missouri

facilities and assaults on staff were 13 times more common.

The final indicator of Missouri's success in regards to program safety relates to

suicide prevention. According to the case study, not a single youth in DYS custody has

committed suicide in the more than 25 years since the agency closes its training schools

and switched to the current model. Nationwide, there were 110 suicide deaths from

juvenile facilities from 1995-1999 and another 21 suicide deaths from 2002-2005. In

other states using the traditional correctional model, Gragg comments, "*The officers get*

*their building assignments and they don't even know the kids, so there is no relationship.*"

Gragg believes that the relationship building between staff and youth help create that safe

atmosphere. Therefore, the constant supervision model, along with a caring, empathetic

staff clearly demonstrates its capability in maintaining a safe environment for youth

within DYS facilities.

Educational achievement and improvement in transitions back to communities are

major components of the Missouri Model. According to the literature, just 25% of

confined juvenile offenders nationwide make one year of academic progress for every year they spend in custody (Dedel, 1997). In Missouri, it is a requirement that every youth takes a standardized test at entry and upon leaving the DYS facility and three-fourths advance at least as fast as a typical student in public school. Division of Youth Service facilities also offer the opportunity for youth to earn high school credits while within the facility. Gragg says,

> *Education is really important within our programs and the education program is fully integrated into their treatment plan. In fact, we sometimes refer to our classroom as the therapeutic classroom. Completion is really important and we try to ensure every kids has a plan for completing school.*

Academic success has also been achieved through DYS residents passing their GED exam, completing high school requirements or earning high school diplomas at a much higher rate than other states. For example, in Missouri one-fourth of all youth exiting a DYS facility after their 16th birthdays had completed their secondary education, with 278 residents passing their GED exam, 36 earning diplomas, whereas, only 131 GED s and three high school diplomas were awarded in South Carolina. Gragg adds, "*Our goal by 2014 is that at least 50% of the kids that are 17 or older will have completed high school before they leave our care.*" The emphasis on education and classroom learning will be explored more in the program structure section.

A healthy engaged transition back into communities is often the ticket to success for youth. Delinquent youth returning from correctional placements are likely to have

greater difficulty returning to school unless they receive special interventions, and these are often in short supply (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Recognizing this trend, DYS places special emphasis on assisting youth with enrolling in school or other vocational programs post release by employing a comprehensive case-management system and providing aftercare supports.

This transition is so important that both participants highlighted the successful features of their program in regards to developing connections to the community and within the family. Decker reports,

> *One of the greatest commodities that we have is the relationship with the family and the youth. We have transition meetings and the idea of the transition meetings is to get together all the parties that are responsible for the transition of the youth and using the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model to help with youth, family and community support. We look at the systems that have the biggest impact: family, school, peers, in some cases religious affiliation, extended family and agency support.*

Gragg adds,

> *We operate under the idea that we begin with the end in mind so we are transitioning them from day one. The entire time we are working on the individualized treatment plan we are moving towards release and discharge from DYS. More specifically, when a young person is ready to move from a residential facility back into the community, we want to make sure they are able to get into*

*something to continue their education, whether it is public school or vocational*

*school.*

In the Casey report it states that Missouri enabled the vast majority of youth

exiting DYS custody in 2008 (85.3%) to be productively engaged in school, college

and/or employment at the time of discharge. Gragg underscores the importance of quick

engagement when he says, "*I think there have been studies that indicate that if you don't*

*have a kid productively involved in some activity within 10 days of his release from a*

*residential program that the chances of him re-offending go up*." The correlation

between the high rate of youth involved in school or employment in Missouri is highly

likely to be related to the state's low recidivism rate.

The last impressive program component in the Missouri model is its low cost to

taxpayers. In 2008, the DYS budget was estimated at $87 million, or the equivalent to

$155 per youth. In the case study it is noted that not including costs for juvenile

probation, which is a state function in Maryland but not in Missouri, Maryland's juvenile

corrections agency spends more than $270 for every young person of juvenile age. One

key factor in Missouri's ability to keep costs lower is the relatively brief period of

confinement. The average for youth in a DYS facility is 4-6 months for youth placed in

non-secure group homes and 9-12 months in secure confinement. Gragg adds,

*If we can have an effective length of stay that is only as long as necessary instead*

*of determinate sentencing and that in combination with our low recidivism rate,*

*with less kids being recycled back into the system then we can hold our*

*population rates down. Those two things help keep our costs down.*

In other states many youth stay in custody longer. For instance, the average length of stay in North Carolina juvenile facilities was 386 days in 2007 and in California youth average three years in confinement. The lessened length of stay lowers the costs to taxpayers. Another cost-saver to tax payers is the lower salaries for youth correctional officers than most other states. The program's emphasis on all the aforementioned components in this section directly relate to the greatest cost in savings, lowered recidivism rates due to the future success of program graduates in avoiding future crimes. Decker cites keeping a young person from a life of crime as the most significant cost-saver for the state. He says, "*Our current corrections director of Missouri will openly credit the DYS with limiting the number of additional prisons that had to be built in Missouri. Our population is not growing at the rate of other prisons in various states.*" Overall its ability to change youth's delinquent behavior and make better choices in the future is what makes an impact on the cost of the program.

Lastly to identify its program success it is important to highlight six key components that distinguish the Missouri model from other states. Those key program components are: (a) placing youth who require confinement into smaller facilities located near the youth's homes and families, rather than incarcerating delinquent youth in large, far-away, prison like training schools; (b) placing youth into closely supervised small groups and applies rigorous treatment process offering extensive and ongoing individual

attention, rather than isolating confined youth in individual cells; (c) placing great emphasis on (and achieves admirable success in) keeping youth safe not only from physical aggression but also from ridicule and emotional abuse; doing so through constant supervision and supportive peer relationships rather than through coercive techniques that are commonplace in most youth correctional systems; (d) Missouri helps confined youth develop academic, pre-vocational, and communication skills that improve their ability to succeed following release—along with crucial insights into the roots of their delinquent behavior; (e) Missouri reaches out to family members and involves them both as partners in the treatment process and as allies in planning for success in the aftercare transition, rather than keeping families at a distance and treating them as the source of delinquent youth's problems; (f) Missouri provides considerable support and supervision for youth transitioning home from a residential facility—conducting intensive aftercare planning prior to release, monitoring and mentoring youth closely in the first crucial weeks following release. These six program components will be outlined further in the program structure section and how they relate to Missouri's success in reducing recidivism rates.

**Program Structure**

The program's structure is dictated by the six major program components. The smaller size of the Missouri's facilities allows for lots of individualized attention and developing relationships with staff. In addition to the smaller facilities, residents enjoy the benefits of local programming close to home.

The Division of Youth Services has divided the state into five regions with a four-level continuum of programs and facilities in each.  The first is community-based supervision programs for the least serious offenders.  Statewide, 12% of youth are placed in these programs that usually operate from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. every weekday to provide academic education and counseling.  These are also referred to as day-treatment centers or community resource centers by Gragg.  He reports,

*The kids report to us during the daytime and we have 185 slots.  We're redefining them as community resource centers because the day treatment centers were similar to alternative schools with a treatment component and now we're looking to expand those with other services, with mental health, family treatment and job assistance.*

Youth with limited offending histories are placed in group homes that traditionally house 10-12 youth who have committed only status offenses or misdemeanors.  The group home site provides school on-site, extensive individual, group and family counseling.  The stay in these facilities is traditionally four to six months.  Gragg reports that there are currently seven regionally-based facilities that each house a total of 70 beds.

The third group is placed into the state's 20 moderately secure facilities, which are located in residential neighborhoods, state parks and on two college campuses.  In these facilities, youth are closely supervised by staff, participate in counseling and if successful in counseling awarded the opportunity to participate in community service jobs.  Gragg added that the doors within these facilities usually remain unlocked to still allow for

freedom of movement within the building.  The typical stay in these facilities is six to nine months.

The most serious offenders are placed into seven secure care residential facilities, each with a daily population of 30 youth.  These facilities are surrounded by a perimeter fence and are locked at all times.  The major difference for these youth is the lessened opportunity to participate in activities outside the facility, instead the community is brought into the facility so youth are gradually reintroduced to the community.  The stay for this facility is similar to the moderate facilities but based on youth readiness.

The non-institutional environment of the facilities is also part of the program structure.  In most facilities, youth sleep in dorm-like rooms that are adjoined by a larger pod area with a living room feel with couches and coffee tables for group treatment.  In addition, most facilities have a pet of some kind, ranging from cats, dogs to live chickens, even an iguana.  Youth are allowed to call staff by their first names and this creates a community aspect and social atmosphere in even the secure facilities.  Both Decker and Gragg attribute this "homey" environment as creating a safer space for youth to develop solid relationships with staff.

The influence of group treatment is a major part of program structure.  In every type of facility, each youth spends virtually every waking minute with their treatment team.  These teams of 10-12 youth sleep in the same dorm room, eat together, study together, exercise and do chores together and attend daily therapy sessions together.  The constant nature of the group does not allow youth to hide and if they act out they are

accountable to the group and often are called upon to explain their thoughts and feelings. Groups are held at such a high level of importance that even residents with varying academic capabilities are put in the same educational courses as their other group members so they can learn with their peers.

Individual case management is offered to every resident in all facilities. Each resident is provided a service coordinator who assists with care during confinement and after release. By providing each youth with one service coordinator, Gragg says,

*There is that continuity piece that we think is really helpful because the kid and*

*the family are only building one relationship with one person and who is going to*

*be continuous with them throughout their whole experience.*

As previously mentioned, many other case management systems in other states involve a different case manager for every step and both Decker and Gragg agreed that this just creates barriers for kids in developing trust and building relationships.

The treatment plan process is in four major stages. The first is orientation, where youth are briefed in the procedures, expectations and environment of a DYS facility. The second is self-discovery, where young people enter the self-exploration process to begin seeing how their current problems and behaviors have roots in their family histories and they also take responsibility for the past crimes. Integration is the third stage where young people can begin applying the lessons they have learned about themselves in the here and now by taking on a leadership role in the group, reopening communication channels with parents or other relatives or doing community service projects. The last

stage is transition where youth begin to work with their service coordinators and families to adopt a plan for success for when they return home. These four stages are monitored by all DYS staffers and youth go through them at their own pace.

The program structure in regards to safety is demonstrated by the constant supervision of staff. It is a DYS policy that there must be two staffers for every treatment group. Since most incidents were found to happen at night, it also became a policy to employ two youth specialists at night. Another practice of DYS that differs from most states is the use of peer restraint. If a young person starts to endanger the group, staff has trained peers to help restrain the peer who has lost control. This practice is controversial but DYS has found it creates an atmosphere of safety and trust amongst youth residents. The emphasis in program structure on creating a safe and non-threatening atmosphere for youth has contributed to its good safety record mentioned in the program success section.

Another major part of the program structure is the emphasis placed on building youth's communication skills, pursuing academic progress and employment. In fostering communication skills, DYS allows its youth residents to lead tours of the facility when visitors come from out of state. This practice allows youth to build confidence in themselves and their program. It also allows them to practice skills of communicating with strangers, making eye contact, and articulating a positive message. The practice of constantly soliciting youth's opinions and valuing those opinions also assists in building young people's confidence and social skills.

As noted earlier, the education approach is non-conventional in that youth participate in classroom training with their group, regardless of level of education. This format allows for a better staff-to-youth ratio of two staff for every 12 youth and therefore more individualized attention. Youth outcomes are still better than other states that take a larger classroom approach. Decker adds,

> *The education piece makes us the envy of our peers around the country because of our structure of smaller classrooms and working with a group of 10-12 kids. The social emotional competence is layered into the school experience so the fear of failure becomes less of a factor.*

The fact that DYS operates as its own school district and can draw educational funding through a revenue base from local taxpayers, also contributes to its good outcomes with youth.

Employment opportunities within the DYS are offered to those youth participants who have demonstrated significant progress in treatment. Through a $678,000 annual appropriation from the Missouri state legislature, DYS provided actual work experience for more than 900 youth per year in all levels of care. These experiences vary but some youth work for local non-profits and for facilities that are located in state parks, they assist with grounds and park maintenance.

The WORKKEYS program is a newly developed employment certification program within the state that both Decker and Gragg highlighted in the interviews as being highly effective in assisting youth in finding employment. Developed by the same

company that administers high school ACT tests, it provides a tool for measuring

academic and work readiness.  After completing the test, youth are administered a

competency certificate that is then viewed by potential employers in the state (usually

partnered with DYS) as a hiring measure.  The WORKKEYS certificate can connect

youth with potential employers and assist them in finding work after release.

Family support is another major component in the program structure.  According

to the literature, one of the most commonplace and crippling flaws in state juvenile

correction systems is the failure to reach out, support and engage families of delinquent

teens.  The Missouri approach recognized that failure and provides family therapists to

engage families from the beginning of confinement into aftercare.  As soon as young

person is placed into custody, the DYS service coordinator meets with the parents and

encourages them to take ownership in the process and be active collaborators.  There is

major emphasis placed on working with families to provide a smooth transition for each

youth.  During residential treatment the service coordinators work with families regularly

to resolve issues at home in order to prepare families to help support the young person to

become successful.  Decker says, "*They view the family as the the true expert on their

own kid.*"  Believing that families are a strength and should be used as a resource instead

of a deficit is echoed by Gragg as something that makes Missouri's programs different.

In addition, family therapy is offered for all families.  According to DYS, 25-30

percent of DYS youth participate in some form of family therapy before leaving custody.

Even if families don't engage in therapy, the service coordinator meets with the family

before a youth's release and offers tips for re-enrolling in school, identifying suitable extracurricular activities, setting curfews, and other rules for supervision. These practices enable youth to have at least one involved family member who can serve as a adult mentor once they are released.

The final program structure component is aftercare planning. Aftercare planning included meetings with youth's family and other staff to assist in enrollment in school, military, Job Corps or other vocational opportunities. To hold itself more accountable for results in pre-release planning, DYS developed a performance indicator to track its success. While in aftercare, DYS retains full custody of youth so that if a young person is showing signs of falling into anti-social or delinquent behavior patterns, he or she can be returned to residential confinement. Monitoring and mentoring of youth once back into the community is also part of the program structure.

The researcher asked both participants to comment on the current linkages DYS offers for aftercare programming and what improvements can be made in the future. Decker emphasized the Community Liaison Councils, established in the early 1990's as one of the most effective links DYS offers for positive youth development. The Councils are citizen groups based in communities that often visit DYS and help raise money for college scholarships for its youth. He says, "*We have a growing relationship with our Community Liaison Councils in providing mentoring services for our youth and they have been a wonderful addition in developing supports for our kids.*"

Gragg speaks more generally about community partnerships but describes them mostly as a coalition of non-profits. He says,

*We're developing relationships with community partners. These are going to be really helpful in providing things for the young person and their family. It is helping kids connect to faith-based services, work, recreation, and mental health services. It also helps them get food, clothing and household goods.*

Community partnerships are a key component to the aftercare structure within DYS and helps youth get connected to services within their own communities.

The program structure assists youth in having a plan when entering the juvenile justice system. The structure also provides a caring, empathetic staff to assist with their plans and help them reach their rehabilitation goals. Without program structure, many youth would be lost as they are in larger correctional facilities in other states.

Lastly, the program structure studied in the case study is defined by its holistic approach in delivering a fully integrated treatment model. Decker cautions against models that are strictly cognitive behavioral, correctional or talk therapy. He believes the emphasis should be placed on models that focus energy on youth 24/7 and that are outcome-based.

One of the goals of doing research on this model was to identify ways to foster better collaboration between the juvenile justice, psychology and social work fields to better serve the juvenile population. In the qualitative interview with Tim Decker he

offers some clear advice on how social workers can work together with juvenile justice

professionals and leaders to provide better services for our youth.

> *I think we need to examine what we are teaching in terms of philosophy and*
>
> *practice. I think paying more attention to skill-building and outcome-based*
>
> *approaches is better and will facilitate cross-system collaboration. I think we*
>
> *also need to look at our leaders and see what it is going to take to lead results*
>
> *based organizations? There has been a shift from social justice oriented practice*
>
> *to direct clinical practice in the social work field. We need to teach these folks to*
>
> *roll up their sleeves and do whatever it takes to support a family and help turn*
>
> *things around. My experience with the kids I'm working with is that the clinical*
>
> *interventions are the ones that aren't the most effective. The clinical models are*
>
> *mostly intermittent have been least effective with this population. In fact, these*
>
> *interventions have failed miserably in working with these deep-end kids in the*
>
> *juvenile justice system. I would really develop a holistic model for social workers*
>
> *and other workers in helping this population. I think you need to be an activist in*
>
> *their life to help them achieve the goals and willing to get out and bust down the*
>
> *barriers and navigate the complex systems of service.*

In Gragg's interview, he warns against strict legislation for evidence-based

practice. He believes that the movement for only evidence-based practices may stifle

creativity and innovation. He says, "*People can't be siloed into particular models. That*

*doesn't mean that the juvenile justice world and the social work world can't work*

*together. I think we need to strike a balance between community safety, rehabilitation*

*treatment and prevention.*" Effective collaboration with the juvenile justice field is a

necessary tool for social workers to be fully engaged in the reentry process and the

recommendations provided by this case study indicate a continued need for social

workers to become dedicated full-time advocates for this youth population.

## Conclusion

The Missouri Model has proved its effectiveness in reducing recidivism and

providing aftercare supports for its youth. This case study on the Missouri Model has

hoped to provide effective interventions for practice and policy that can be used by

professionals in the social work, criminal justice and psychology fields. The effective

rehabilitation of the hundreds of thousands of youth that enter the juvenile criminal

justice system each year could result in a better educated, better trained youth that will

inevitably impact the future of our society.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

**Introduction**

The reintegration process of over 200,000 juveniles occurs each year nationally. Of those, the majority of our juveniles are recycled back into either the juvenile justice system or moved into the adult prison population, with the rates ranging from 55% to 76% re-arrested in the first year (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In California, our Division of Juvenile Justice system is failing our youth. Currently our rates are some of the worst in the country. It is estimated that currently the state of California spends $234,000 per youth per year, a striking ten times the amount some counties spend housing youth at the local level (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2009). Not only is that number exorbitantly higher than other states, our recidivism rate is one of the highest in the nation at 72% (Haapenen, 2007) and the total annual budget is astronomical at $436 million. Bringing services down to a more regional and local level was indicated in the literature as an effective means to reduce costs and recidivism. For example, California counties spend between $22,000-$95,000 per youth per year (Macallair, Males, & McCracken, 2009) and the programs offered by the county that are rooted in therapeutic and evidence based treatment models are shown to reduce recidivism by 22% (Justice Policy Institute, 2009). The evidence in the literature strongly suggests that programs that are therapeutic in nature in place of correctional models are more effective in reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for our youth (Mendel, 2010).

It is in the opinion of this author that California's juvenile justice system is in much need of reform. The training school model that house hundreds of youth is outdated, doesn't focus on rehabilitation and the warehousing environment creates opportunities for increased violence and the continuation of delinquent behavior, which inevitably trains youth to become future criminals. Therefore the future of thousands of youth in California is in the hands of a failing system that needs the collaboration of the criminal justice, social work and psychology fields to provide the linked and integrative services that can lead to their successful transition back into our communities. Specifically, it was the intention of the author to encourage social workers to become fully engaged helpers with this particular population to ensure the advancement of safer more productive communities. The future health of the underserved disadvantaged communities that we as social workers often work in, are dependent upon our ability to deliver integrative services to our youth.

## Overall Summary

The impetus for choosing this topic was brought on by realizing that there is a need for effective local programming for the reintegration of youthful offenders and currently many programs have high recidivism rates. The research problem for this project was to examine the current models for reintegration and identify an effective practice model in the literature. The purpose of this study was three-fold: fill a gap in the social work literature, explore and do a case study that would link research and policy designs to improve aftercare services for juvenile ex-offenders, and foster collaboration

between the criminal justice, psychology and social work fields.  Furthermore, the

purpose of this study was to increase findings on community-based reintegration services

for juvenile ex-offenders and increase findings on effective interventions that have

lowered recidivism rates.  Through the literature review and research, it was found that

effective interventions need to be integrative, holistic and provide a continuum of care

that focused particularly on aftercare to improve reintegration outcomes for youth

(Abrams et al., 2008; Mears & Travis, 2004; Mendel, 2010; Sullivan, 2004).  The

importance of aftercare and engaging youth in school, work or other community

organizations was emphasized in the program under study and suggested by the literature

in reducing recidivism rates in youthful offenders.

The literature review had three major themes: (a) examining the barriers to reentry

and common risk factors associated with unsuccessful reentry; (b) reviewing studies of

former and current reentry programs and initiatives that have been successful in reducing

recidivism and (c) examining policy implications for juvenile and young adult

reintegration and concentrating on the implications for the social work field.  The

literature suggested four common barriers to successful reentry and shared risk factors:

substance abuse, low education level, mental health diagnosis, and lack of family

supports.  The literature also found that dual status youth, as defined as those who

navigate both the juvenile justice system and the Child Protective Services system, often

times becoming part of the foster care system, had even more difficulty in overcoming

those aforementioned barriers and their success rates were often lower (Fields & Abrams, 2010).

The second theme covered the success and failure of current and former reentry programs. With the exception of a few programs like the Preventing Parolee Crime Program (Zhang et al., 2006) and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention's Intensive Aftercare Program (Mears & Travis, 2004) most available programs shared a common result of high recidivism rates and minimal aftercare. The literature offered some effective intervention tools for treatment methodology (Abrams et al., 2008) but otherwise did not provide effective community-based reintegration program models with lowered recidivism rates. In the same section the restorative justice model was outlined and highlighted for some of its minimal successes in improving youth satisfaction but not in reducing recidivism (Abrams et al., 2006; Roy, 1993). Another subsection included findings on programs that focused on the overall improvement of sustainable services based in communities as an integral part of the reentry process and literature that is critical at only looking at recidivism rates as indicators of reentry success (Simmons, 2002; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004). These findings indicated that community accessibility and engagement for youth is extremely important for youth aftercare outcomes.

In the third section of the literature review the author explored implications for the juvenile and young adult reintegration and implications for the social work field. In the literature it stated that the ability of communities to offer integrated transitional

services indicated their success in reentry and it was advised that this should be a clear policy and research goal (Mears & Travis, 2004). In addition, communities that are particularly effective in garnering community-based supports for youth and providing extensive aftercare programs were most successful with reentry outcomes (Abrams et al., 2008; Anthony et al., 2010; Sullivan, 2004). It was strongly encouraged that juvenile justice shift away from correctional models and move towards a more holistic treatment model (Steinberg et al., 2004). The literature demonstrated that localized programs based in communities with an emphasis on aftercare were more successful in reducing recidivism rates.

The literature suggested that an integrative model that can be used by social workers, parole officers and other helping agencies is most effective in reducing recidivism rates. Evidence-based practices like a comprehensive model constructed by Wilson and Howell in 1993 provided a framework that social workers could use with this population. The framework included five major principles summarized here: (a) strengthen the family in its primary responsibility in instilling values, (b) support core social institutions in developing capable responsible youth; (c) promote delinquency preventions as the most cost-effective approach; (d) intervene immediately when delinquent behavior occurs and (e) identify and control the small group of serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders who have failed to respond to intervention (Wilson and Howell, 1993). It was noted in the literature that social workers should facilitate community-based grassroots participation (Jurik et al., 2000) and help communities stand

on their own in providing services to youth. The literature reiterated the need for both the criminal justice and social work fields to work collaboratively and develop cross-disciplinary practice models so that community-based reentry can become prioritized by both disciplines.

Overall, the discoveries in the literature did indicate that there is a lack of successful community-based programs that are designed to reduce recidivism and improve treatment outcomes for youth. The researcher attempted to find an effective practice model or program in California to offer as an example for future practice but was unsuccessful in identifying one that included all the elements of a successful program as stated in the literature. The researcher identified many articles in the juvenile justice literature recognizing the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice as national model of success in reducing recidivism and as an effective integrative model. Therefore, the researcher chose this model for the case study and relied on the Annie E. Casey Foundation Report entitled *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youthful Offenders,* authored by Richard Mendel, for most of the data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the chosen model.

The researcher also interviewed two senior staff from the Division of Youth Services of Missouri (DYS) to complement the findings from the Casey report. Tim Decker, Director of the DYS of Missouri and Dennis Gragg, Assistant Deputy Director of DYS provided insider perspectives on the effectiveness of their model and particularly focused on education and aftercare components as being the most successful in keeping

youth from re-offending. Both respondents also emphasized linkages to social services within communities as being extremely important for youths' transitions back into society. This finding was consistent with the general literature findings.

The data collection found that the philosophy and belief system of the Missouri approach enabled its youth to have the right kind of supports to make the necessary changes that lead to their success. Those three core beliefs are: (a) that all people—including delinquent youth—desire to do well and succeed; (b) that with the right kind of help, all youth can (and most will) make lasting behavioral changes and succeed; and (c) that the mission of youth corrections must be to provide the right kind of help, consistent with public safety, so that young people make needed changes and move on to successful and law-abiding adult lives (Mendel, 2010). As it was stated in the general literature, the Missouri approach found therapeutic interventions over correctional-based ones are more effective in relationship building with youth and inevitably reducing recidivism rates. Specifically, the group therapeutic treatment model employed at localized and regional facilities was cited in the case study as an effective approach that led to better outcomes overall than over larger style campuses that were cited in the general literature as ineffective.

The case study highlighted Missouri's recidivism rate as 8.5% of youth returning to adult prison within three years (Mendel, 2010) and in comparison to the general juvenile justice literature, which indicates a national rate of 55% for juvenile offenders, is significantly lower. The recidivism rate was just one of five major program components

that led to the comprehensive treatment model's success in improving outcomes for youth. The other program components that helped to develop an effective integrative treatment model are: (a) safety within facilities; (b) educational achievement including developing psychosocial competence and independent living skills; (c) improvement in transitions back to communities, with an emphasis on aftercare; and (d) engaging family and community systems in the process. All with the exception of safety were mentioned in the general literature as necessary components in successful reintegration programs.

The findings from the case study also emphasized the importance of treating youth with respect and unconditional positive regard. There is a major difference in Missouri in how staff work with youth and develop long lasting relationships with them. The staff in the DYS facilities tries their best to make it a non-blaming environment and provide a safe nurturing place for youth to grow. It was cited in the general literature that youth need at least one supportive adult mentor in their lives to help them rebuild trust and make positive decisions for themselves. By ensuring individual staff are matched with youth, the Missouri approach provides that important relationship.

## Implications for Social Work Practice

This study has provided the opportunity to delve into the criminal justice and social work literature and identify policy and practice goals that can be shared by both fields. It is clear from the research that punitive correctional approaches are failing and integrative treatment approaches with an emphasis on aftercare should be implemented in all states seeking to improve their outcomes with youth. Particularly in California, where

our recidivism rates are astronomical, currently at 72% (Haapenen, 2007) and the future success of our youth is contingent upon developing better programs within juvenile justice, we should be looking to other states like Missouri for models that we can duplicate and implement here.

Based on the research conducted through this study, social workers have a responsibility to seek out integrative models of practice in working with this population for the best outcomes. It was noted in the case study that clinical models that only practice one type of therapy have not been effective with this population. The systems approach is what the literature showed as one of the most effective ways to develop programming and services for the youthful offender population. As the case study indicated, developing a transition plan that involves family, peers, mentors, schools, and community members or organizations helps connect youth to systems of support that will be engaged fully in the reintegration process.

Social work practice needs to be adaptable, innovative and creative in working with this population. It was suggested by both interviewees that youth cannot be siloed into one model and get successful results. Social workers thus need to develop comprehensive strategies in working with this population and be well aware of the major barriers that exist for this population as well. In addition, the model that was proven to be most effective in working with this population was the group treatment model of therapy, so social workers must become even more operational with group therapy if we want to fulfill roles in youth correctional programs.

**Implications for Social Work Policy**

The other major goal in this study was to identify ways to foster collaboration between the criminal justice, psychology and social work fields. The individual disciplines cannot operate independently from one another and expect to be effective in providing the best services we can for our youth. Social work policy goals must be collaborative with other systems of care and focused on improving accessibility to services. Expanding existing programs for youth within communities and funding for new programs that assist young adults with housing, job assistance, education and counseling services should be a clear policy goal.

Social workers who work in a non-profit setting should set policy goals with their agency around developing and funding aftercare programs that have connections to local community organizations. The role of social workers in helping this population is to enable youth to navigate the complex systems of service and to help youth develop their own plans for success. Social workers must be fully engaged as advocates and sometimes, activists in young people's lives to ensure our youth can become productive and healthy citizens in our society.

**Limitations**

This study was limited in its inability to find a wealth of social work literature dedicated to the subject of juvenile reintegration and therefore relied heavily on the criminal justice literature. In addition, the intent of the study originally was to find out more about current practice models that were effective in working with juvenile ex-

offenders and in reducing recidivism. Since the study did not cover all practice models and juvenile reintegration programs there is reason to believe there are more than the few cited in the literature as effective in reducing recidivism.

The researcher only chose one particular program to explore more fully through a case study and therefore was limited to the findings and recommendations from that one model. Although the case study included a secondary data analysis on the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice and interviewing two expert staff from the Division of Youth Services of Missouri, it was not inclusive of all the policy and research recommendations that could come from studying that model. There are also social work practice and research limitations on the various intervention tools identified in working with population. Those sections could have been more detailed and delivered specific models for social workers to use in practice.

## Conclusion

The study did provide insight into the needs of youth transitioning in and out of public systems of care. The study also explored one model in very descriptive detail so that other criminal justice, social work and psychology professionals could take some of the approaches and adopt them in working with their own youthful offenders in their respective states. It also offered advice to helping professionals to empower this population to work though barriers to service and find community linkages that will help with their reintegration back into society. Overall, this study did identify some encouraging results in the literature that successful reintegration is a possibility for the

200,000 youth that return to our communities each year and with the dedication of social

workers and other helping professionals that process can be improved over time.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in Research

You are invited to participate in a research study that will be conducted by Erin Somers, a graduate student in the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. This study will describe the efficacy of the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice. This program was selected for its success in reducing recidivism rates for juvenile offenders.

Procedures:
After reviewing this form and agreeing to participate you will be given the opportunity to set up a time convenient for you. The interview should take approximately one hour. It will be audio taped. The tape will be transcribed and then destroyed.

As a participant in the interview you can decide at any point to not answer any specific question or to stop the interview.

Risks:
The discussion of the topic in the interview is not expected to pose any risk to the participants.

Benefits:
By being part of this study you may provide effective interventions for other juvenile justice programs across the country and contribute to the literature on this subject for future research. This information may help provide recommendations for policy revisions and future program development.

Confidentiality:
All information is confidential and every effort will be made to protect your anonymity. Your responses on the audiotape will be confidential. Information you provide on the consent form will be stored separately from the audiotapes in a secure location. All audiotapes will be transcribed by the researcher. The researcher's thesis advisor will have access to the transcriptions for the duration of the project. The final research report will not include any identifying information. All of the data will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Compensation:
There will be compensation offered for participating in this research study.

Rights to withdraw:
If you decide to participate in this interview, you can withdraw at any point. During the interview you can elect not to answer any specific question.

Consent to Participate as a Research Subject


I have read the descriptive information on the Research Participation cover letter. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.  My signature indicates that I have received a copy of the Research Participation cover letter and I agree to participate in the study.


I  _____  agree to be audio taped.

Signature: _____    Date:  _____


If you have any questions you may contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or email me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Or, if you need further information, you may contact my thesis advisor:

    Susan Eggman, Ph.D., MSW
    C/o California State University, Sacramento
    916-278-7181
    eggmans@csus.edu

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. Can you provide a brief history of how this current model used by the Missouri Division of Justice was initially developed and with what purposes in mind?

2. What do you see as the major differences in the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice than those models used in other states?

3. What do you see as the largest benefits of this model as opposed to models used in other states?

4. How many community-based juvenile correction centers do you have across the state of Missouri?

5. How do you account for the improvements in safety at Missouri's correction centers as opposed     to other states?

6. How does the Missouri Division of Juvenile Justice keep its cost to taxpayers so low?

7. What intervention factors have contributed to the recidivism rates reaching 8.5% for juveniles    sentenced to adult prison within three years of release?

8. How many case managers are employed at each facility? What is the ratio of case managers to    juveniles in custody?

9. What type of interventions are employed at the centers while youth are in custody in terms of     substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, vocational training or in educational  attainment?

10. What type of transitional services are offered upon anticipation of release back into the                                    community?

11. What current linkages does the Division of Youth Services have to aftercare services for juvenile ex-offenders and what improvements can be made to better those services?

12. How do you think we can foster collaboration between the criminal justice, psychology and social work fields to better serve this population?

13. What do you think are the most effective interventions for reducing recidivism rates in juvenile offenders?

14.  Why do you think the Missouri Model of Juvenile Justice has been recognized as a national model of success?

APPENDIX C

Letter of Permission for Research Project

This letter permits Erin Somers to conduct research on the Division of Youth Services of Missouri for her graduate thesis work. The research will be conducted through phone interviews with three Division of Youth Services staff members. The interviews will be audio taped. The results of the interview will be transcribed and then destroyed. All information is confidential and every effort will be made to protect anonymity.

The agency understands the purpose of this research is academic and the results of the research will be noted and published only within Sacramento State University's library. The agency also allows Erin Somers to report her findings with the purpose to expand the knowledge base on effective interventions for juvenile offenders.

The participation in this research project is completely voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

I _____ authorize Erin Somers to conduct this research study of my agency.

Signature: _____     Date: _____

If you have any questions you may contact me at ▋▋▋▋▋▋ or email me at ▋▋▋▋▋▋▋▋▋▋▋

Or, if you need further information, you may contact my thesis advisor:

Susan Eggman, Ph.D., MSW
C/o California State University, Sacramento
916-278-7181
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APPENDIX D

Biography for Tim Decker

## Bio for Tim Decker

Tim Decker was appointed as the Director of the Missouri Division of Youth Services in January 2007. For the past 26 years he has served in a variety of leadership positions with the Missouri Department of Social Services and the Greater Kansas City Local Investment Commission (LINC); one of Missouri's innovative public/private community partnerships focused on citizen engagement, local governance, natural helping networks, and neighborhood-based services.

Tim previously served as a program manager and administrator with the Division of Youth Services from 1984 – 1993. During this time, the agency was engaged in major system transformation toward more humane, therapeutic, developmental, and effective approaches to juvenile justice. Tim managed programs throughout Missouri's continuum of care including community, moderate and secure care facilities; serving as an Assistant Regional Administrator in the Northwest Region.

Tim worked from 1994-1995 with the Missouri Family & Community Trust statewide system change initiative; and has served as a social worker, therapist, and treatment coordinator with agencies in the private non-profit sector. Tim was certified as a national trainer for Families and Schools Together from 1999 - 2007, exemplary model prevention program with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Tim earned his degree in Social Work and Psychology in 1982 from Park University in Parkville, Missouri and completed the Institute for Education Leadership Education Policy Fellowship Program in 2007.

Tim serves as a frequent presenter on topics such as juvenile justice reform, results-based accountability, family and community engagement; and organizational leadership, management, and culture change.

APPENDIX E

Biography for Dennis Gragg

# DENNIS M. GRAGG

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*1902 Bunker Hill Road · Jefferson City, Missouri 65109 · 573/761-4057 (h)*
*Email:* Dennis.Gragg@dss.mo.gov *(w)* dmgragg1@hotmail.com *(h)*

## EXPERIENCE

Division of Youth Services, Department of Social Services
*Assistant Deputy Director*, *January 2001 to Present*

Directs Missouri's juvenile corrections agency in its provision of a comprehensive education program serving approximately 2400 delinquent and at-risk youth per year. Other duties include providing administrative organization for the Juvenile Court Diversion program; monitoring legislative activity having potential impact on Missouri's at-risk and on the Division of Youth Services; treatment program quality review, data assessment and strategic planning activities.

Division of Youth Services, Department of Social Services
Education Director, *February 1994 to January 2001*

Directed the coordination, evaluation and technical direction of the Division's academic, special education and vocational programs and curriculum. Monitored supervision of residential and community-based services and programs. Developed operational policies, procedures and systems required to develop and evaluate educational services provided to delinquent and at-risk youth. Guided community service coordinators in developing improved school–community relations and reintegration activities.

W.E. Sears Youth Center, Division of Youth Services, Department of Social Services
Education Supervisor, *October 1985 to February 1994*

Supervised teachers and support staff providing educational services to 80 youth in a residential care facility. Developed programming framework for youth with special treatment and educational needs. Achieved an integrated approach to

meet student needs for treatment and education.  Developed compliance and implementation systems for multiple education programs, including 85% successful GED program.

Boonville Correctional Center, Department of Corrections
Placement Center Coordinator, *May 1983 to October 1985*

Developed educational testing and placement center for incarcerated adults.  Coordinated the development of 90% successful GED program.  Assisted in the reformation of the academic program including computer managed and computer assisted instruction.

Training School for Boys, Division of Youth Services, Department of Social Services
Teacher and Special Education Coordinator, *October 1976 to May 1983*

Education and remediation of basic academic and life skills.  Evaluated delinquent youth with special education needs.  Coordinated development of individualized education services.


# EDUCATION

University of Missouri - Columbia, Columbia, Missouri
    *Graduate program in Secondary School Administration, 1981 – 1984*
    *Masters in Education, Adult Education Administration, 1981*
    *Bachelor of Science in Education, 1976*

Penn Valley Community College – Kansas City, Missouri
    *General Studies, 1971 – 1972*


# PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIPS

5.      Missouri Student Success Network (MSSN), board member
6.      Mental Health Transformation Working Group, member
7.      Comprehensive System Management Team, member
8.      Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA), member
9.      Missouri Juvenile Justice Information System (MOJJIS), advisory panel member
10.    Youth Prevention Education Work Group, member

11.     Children of Incarcerated Parents, past member
12.     Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), two-term past member
13.     American Correctional Association
14.     Correctional Educators Association
15.     Missouri Correctional Educators Association
16.     Kappa Delta Pi – Honor Society in Education
17.     Missouri Alumni Association

## CIVIC ACTIVITIES

15.     Jefferson City Figure Skating Club, board member, past president and treasurer
16.     United States Figure Skating, member
17.     Boy Scouts of America, past Cubmaster, Den Leader
18.     Little League Baseball, past coach and manager
19.     Optimist Soccer League, past coach
20.     American Bowling Congress, past officer
21.     Neighborhood Association, past president

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