



SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

UNO Juvenile Justice Certificate Capstone Projects



Purpose

The program is designed to enhance participants' knowledge of "what works" and develop skills that can be applied directly with the youth they serve. The learning environment creates safe space for professional development by engaging in critical dialogue, self-reflection, skill demonstration, and exposure to experiential learning opportunities.

Goals of the JJ Certificate Program

**The certificate program aims to impact
Nebraska's juvenile justice workforce by:**

- 1. Developing the capacity of current and future juvenile justice professionals to implement best practices in their organizations and Nebraska's Juvenile Justice System.**
- 2. Equipping future juvenile justice leaders with the knowledge to lead Nebraska in an evidence-based manner.**
- 3. Growing a statewide network of juvenile justice professionals who act as a resource and support to each other and their communities.**

Capstone Project Requirements



To successfully complete the Juvenile Justice Certificate Program, each participant must complete a capstone project. The project chosen must:

(1) demonstrate juvenile justice knowledge learned and

(2) apply that learning to benefit your organization/community.

Participants should utilize implementation science concepts to assist in successful completion of their project.

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Development of a Proposed Model & Program Plan

- **Matthew Allen (Founder of Community Based Services):**
 - School Integration Research
- **Charlie Valle (Community Youth Coach)**
 - Data Collection
- **Diante Jones (Gang-Specific Youth Coach)**
 - Model & Program Planning.

Phase III

Re-Entry/ATD Program

The...

Who?-What?-When?-Where?-Why?

Behind it All!

Target Population?

- High-risk gang-involved youth being afforded the opportunity to enter into a court-supervised process of accountability and **rehabilitation**.
- Ages 12-18.

What Is the Service?

- A supervised structure designed to create & increase accountability, as well as sharpen existing skills and develop new skills (rehabilitation) to successfully navigate adolescence & gang involvement.

What Is the End-Goal?



Who Is Providing this Service?

- Gang-Specific Judge
- Gang-Specific County Prosecutor
- Gang-Specific Defense Attorney
 - **Direct Care:**
 - **Guardian**
 - **Gang Specific Probation Officer**
 - **Gang-Specific Youth Coach**
 - **Educational Support**
 - **Gang Specific Therapist**



What is a Gang-Specific Youth Coach (GSYC)?

- Understanding the benefit of accountability through structure, having experience in juvenile justice and working with youth in the street-gang culture, the **GSYC** ensures the youth the opportunity, information and coaching to increase accountability & **rehabilitation**.

Local Schools Are Looking for a Solution

**Gang Activity in the Schools:
3.2 on a Scale of 1 to 5**

“[Gangs] are not something we address on a daily basis. The real gang members do their activity outside of school. But when it [gangs] is a problem [in school], it affects 80% of the school.” –School Personnel

Schools are Hearing & Observing:

- Gang Talk
- Hand Gestures
- Gang Stories
- Student-Interactions
- Police Involvement
- Gang Graffiti

Sense of Hopelessness/Looking to Parents

- ❑ “By the time the kids are in high school, the interventions would be pointless. We need more community outreach, free, quality child care programs, adult education programs, etc.”
- ❑ “As a school there are virtually no tools for us to affect change, it happens in the community then we have it spill over here.”
- ❑ “Forced parent meetings, support groups, in house community supports.”
- ❑ “I feel that the only way to get students to really change is to inconvenience parents. In other words, make it more difficult on the adults who are in charge of these youths who participate in gang behaviors.”

Where to Implement Service?

Detention	Group Home	Native Home Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Protection• Physical Abuse• Emotional Abuse/Neglect• Psychological Abuse/Neg.• Neg./Pos. Influences• Alcohol/Drug Abuse• Temporary Relief from Native Environment• Short Stay (Must Leave)• Change Their Reality• Can't Get Shot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Protection• Physical Abuse• Emotional Abuse/Neglect• Psychological Abuse/Neg.• Neg./Pos. Influences• Alcohol/Drug Abuse• Temporarily Relief from Native Environment• Short Stay (Must Leave)• Can't Change Reality• Access to Life Changing Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Protection• Physical Abuse• Emotional Abuse/Neglect• Psychological Abuse/Neg.• Neg./Pos. Influences• Alcohol Drug/Abuse• 24/7 Native Environment• Can Change Reality & Create Permanent Relief from Native Environment• Can Change Reality• Address real issues in real time in real space.



When to Implement This Service:

- **Re-Entry:** For the purpose of full program disclosure, to gauge family participation and install in-home structure, services will begin with the guardian 30-45 days prior to the youth being released from detention. Youth will receive first visits while detained.
- **ATD:** In the interest of full program disclosure, to gauge family participation and install in-home structure, services will first begin with the guardian 30-days prior to the structure being introduced to the youth.

What Do Services Look Like On the Ground?

- The daily/hourly structure & accountability of a youth detention center, united with in-home gang-specific support under tight court-supervision.

What Do Services Look Like On the Ground?

Phase 1: Accountability	Phase 2: Awareness	Phase 3: Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With Phase I privileges available to be earned, youth learn the virtue of accountability and restore trust with their guardian through skills & virtues such as time management, accepting decisions and self-control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With Phase II privileges available to be earned, youth continue in progress from Phase 1, while increasing their awareness & exposure in preparation for integrating pro-socially back into the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With Phase III privileges available to be earned, youth continue in progress from Phase 1 & 2 youth, while integrating back into the community through structured pro-social endeavors.

Program Structuring

Priority-Goals:

1. Maintain Schedule
2. Respect Guardian Decisions

Ex. School Day Hourly Structure

6AM	Wake up/Morning Routine
7AM	Off to School
8AM	School
9AM	School
10AM	School
11AM	School
12PM	School
1PM	School
2PM	School
3PM	Report Home from School
4PM	Home Work
5PM	Home Work/Down-Time
6PM	Dinner/Chore
7PM	Evening Hygiene/Free-Time
8PM	Free-Time
9PM	Free-Time
10PM	Bed-Time
11PM	Lights Out
12AM	Lights Out

Ex. Saturday Hourly Structure

6AM	Sleep-In
7AM	Sleep-In
8AM	Sleep-In
9AM	Wake Up, Chore, Breakfast
10AM	Comm. Serv. Project
11AM	Comm. Serv. Project
12PM	Lunch & Comm. Serv. Project
1PM	Comm. Serv. Project.
2PM	Free Time
3PM	Free Time
4PM	Free Time
5PM	Free Time
6PM	Free Time
7PM	Dinner
8PM	Free-Time
9PM	Free-Time
10PM	Free Time
11PM	Bed-Time
12AM	Lights Out

Executing Priority-Goals:

1. Work efficiently w/o procrastinating.
2. Not arguing about or attempting manipulate way out of decisions.

“Slowly Gained”

Positive Reinforcement

“Better Sustained”

Level	Behavior	Positive Consequence (PC)		
Level 1 Pro-Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Pro-Social Voice Tone & Pitch✓ Pro-Social Word Choice✓ Accepting A-Team Decisions w/o Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk	✓ Phase Priv.	✓ Pos. Report
Level 2 Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Maintain Schedule✓ Complete Weekly Scheduled Task/Appointments✓ Report Whereabouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk	✓ Phase Priv.	✓ Pos. Report
Level 3 Self-Control & Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Refrain from High Risk People & Places.✓ Avoid High Risk Behaviors 1✓ Handle High Risk Situation in a Law Abiding Fashion.✓ Refrain from ingesting illegal substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk✓ \$5/wk	✓ Phase Priv.	✓ Pos. Report
Level 4 Self-Control & Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Avoid High Risk Behavior 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ \$5/wk	✓ Phase Priv.	✓ Pos. Report

Does it Match JJ Reform Efforts?

- *Juvenile Justice Reform: “Recidivism reduction through assessing the contextual circumstances of each youth’s criminal behavior, and then partnering with evidenced based community programs that require accountability and skill building for successful program completion.” - Paraphrased*



Need for Program Identified as a Result of a Gang Intervention Pilot Program

- **Mentor Model:**

- An experienced adult-person, having successfully escaped street-gang affiliation & culture, providing 1-on-1 guidance, resources and support to current street-gang involved youth.

“If you let a leak go, it can turn into a flood. So I swing first.”



“What caused the leak? And are you the only one at risk to get wet?”



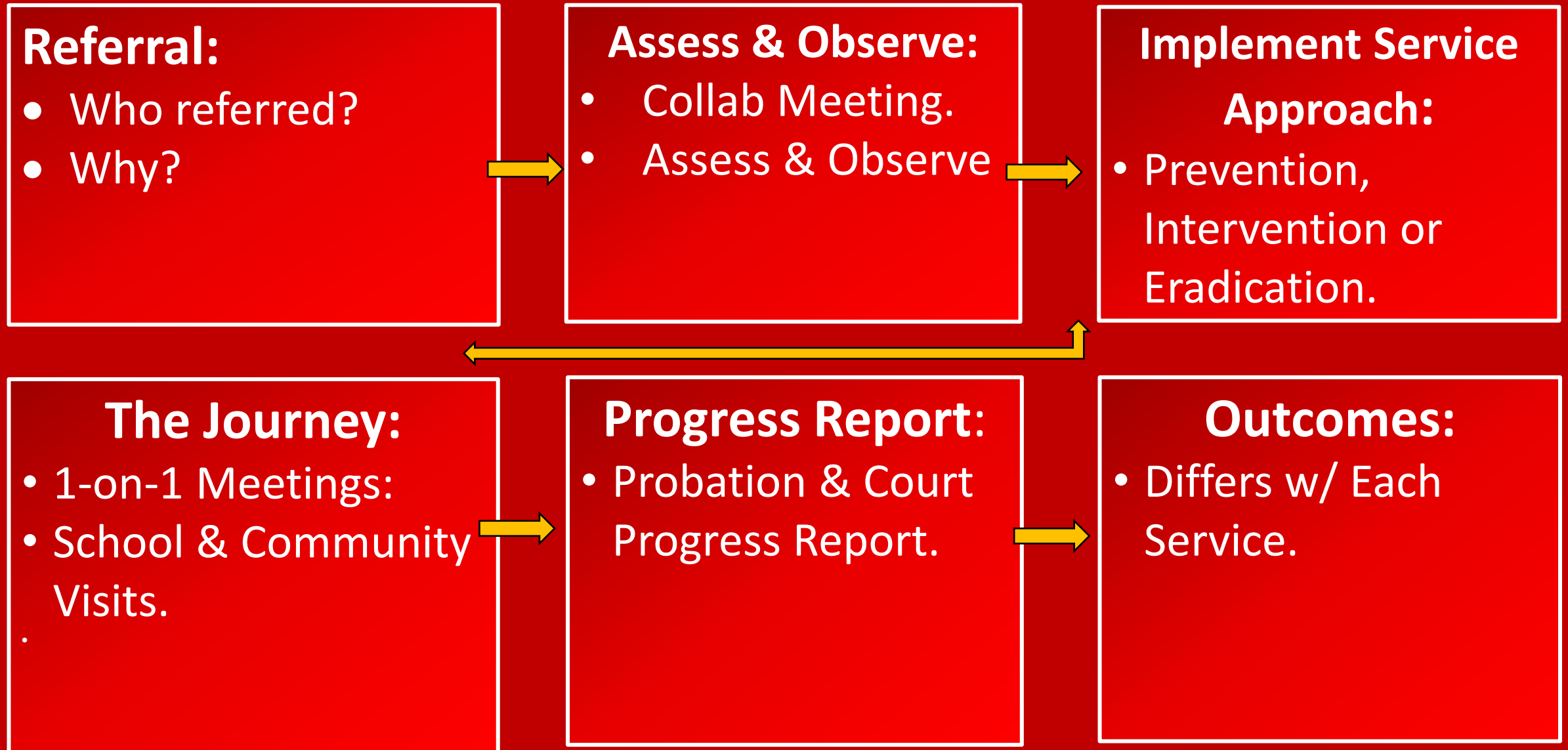
8-10 Year Gang Intervention Pilot Program

- **Pilot Active:** 2014-2019 & 2021-Present
- **1-on-1 Services:** Gang Prevention, Gang Intervention & Gang Eradication.
- **Group Services:** Consulting, Training, Gang Prevention & Intervention Workshops.
- **Youth Acquired By:**
 - Criminal Offense > Juvenile Court > Probation: **G.I.** served among EM & Tracker, Therapy, Family Support, CYC, IFP, MST, Etc.
 - Other Family Service Agencies.

Body of Work

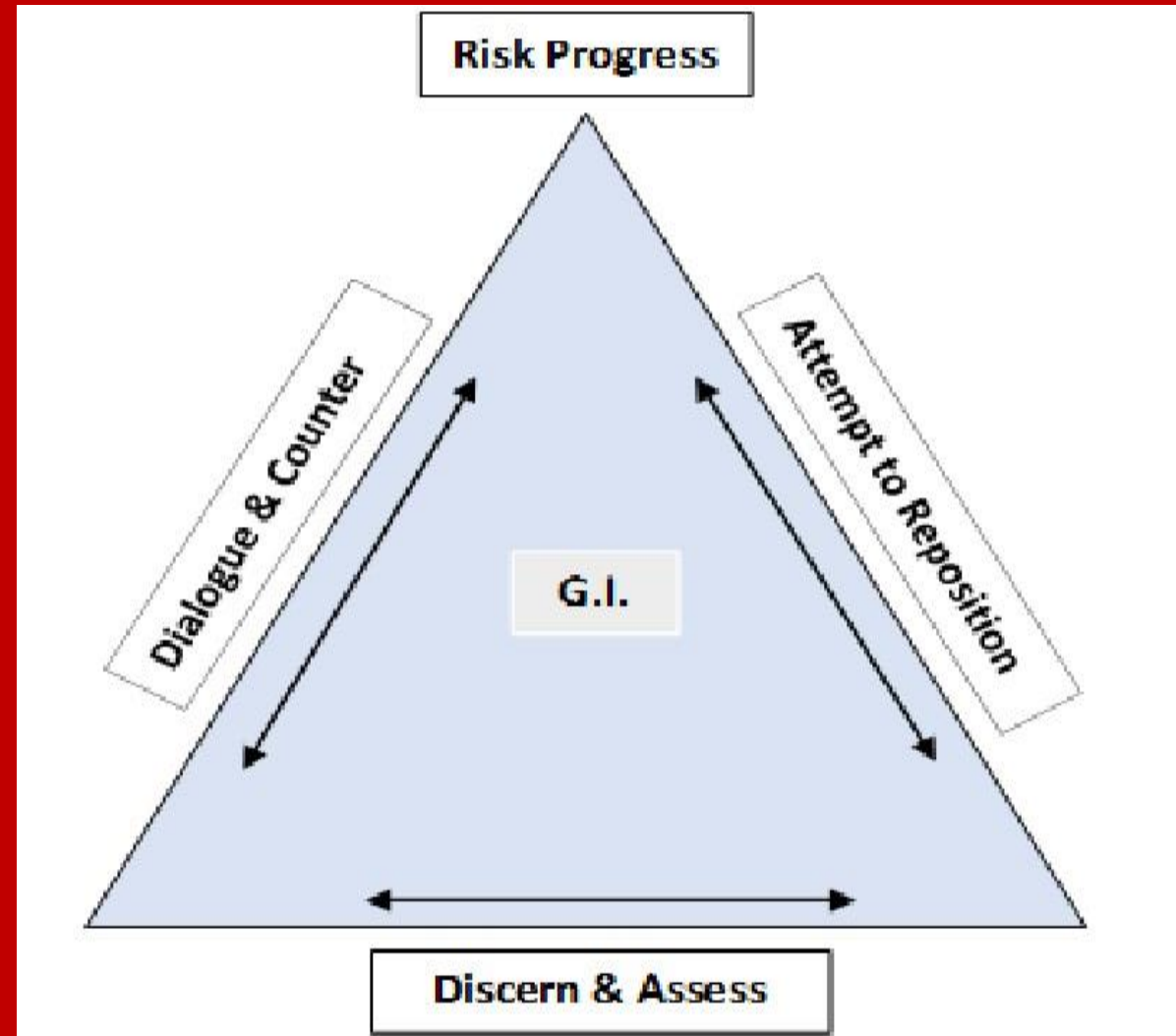
- 250+ Street-Gang Involved Youth
- 29 Different Street Gangs
- 26 Different Criminal Offense from: Criminal Mischief to Murder.
- 10,000+ Service Hours of 1-on-1 **G.I.**
- Every Factor Level, Continuum Status, Stage of Change and Outcome

Gang Intervention (G.I.) Service Execution



The Journey – Everyday Task

- ✓ **Discerning & Assessing:** The youth's involvement status & subsequent risk, as the gang culture is unstable and creates risks out of thin air.
- ✓ **Dialogue:** Pursuing a paradigm shift, the youth's current worldview is sought, as the worldview exposes neurological brain connectivity, exposing which **G.I.** curriculum tool to employ.
- ✓ **Reposition Attempt:** To gain new information and exposure and ultimately reduce risk level, and speed up the journey of street-gang affiliation.



Took Data on 100 Street-Gang Involved Youth

Gang	Continuum Status	Factor Level	Service	Outcome
Gang Name	Member	Factor	Intervention	Outcome
Gang Name	Affiliated	Semi-Factor	Intervention	Outcome

Basic G.I. Data on 100 Street-Gang Involved Youth

Disclaimer: No matter how good or bad the outcome, these charted outcomes do not tell the story. Each case has its own twists and turns for the better or for the worse.

Left Gang or Negative Peers	0/100	0%
Completed Program & Reduced Risk	40/100	40%
Unsuccessful Discharged (AWOL or Non-participation)	23/100	23%
Re-offended led to Detainment or Ordered to Group Home During Services	32/100	32%
Killed (within 3 years after services)	5/100	5%

Gradual-to-Optimal Outcomes

Typical “Evidenced Based” World

Optimum Outcomes

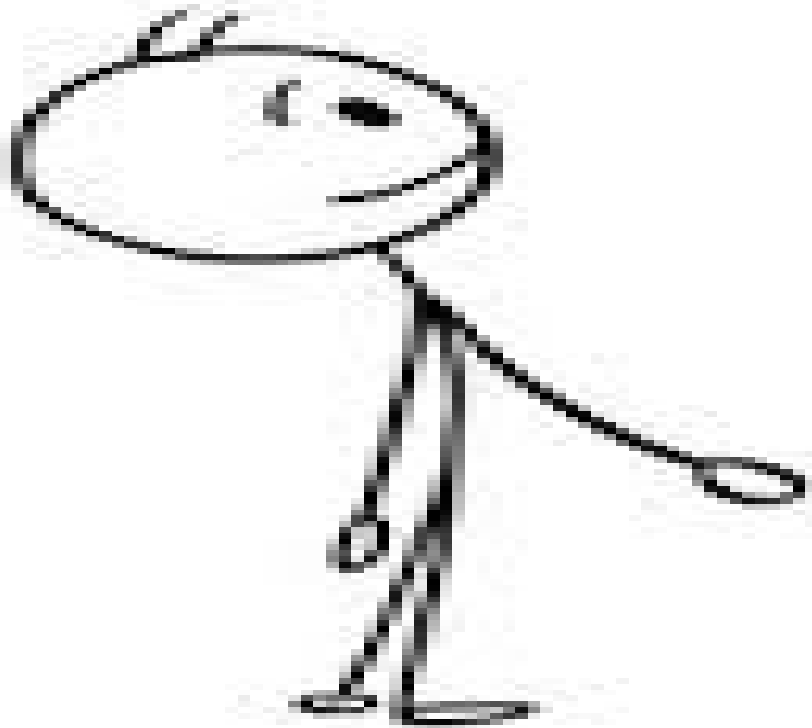
- ✓ “Stay away from Negative Peers”
- ✓ “Find Positive Peers”
- ✓ “Get a Pro-Social Activity”
- ✓ “Develop a Structured Routine”
- ✓ “Develop Self/Anger Control”
- ✓ “No New Criminal Charges”

Street-Gang Intervention*

Gradual-to-Optimum Outcomes

- ✓ Reduce Time Spent w/ High-Risk Peers
- ✓ Connect to: + Place + Thing + People
- ✓ Connect to: + Place + Thing + People
- ✓ Collab with & equipment Parents
- ✓ Paradigm Shift in Anti-Social Beliefs
- ✓ Paradigm Shift in Anti-Social Beliefs

***“I’m still gang! But I’m out
of the way. I’m with girl
everyday.”***



Next Steps...

1. Continued Program Development.
2. Increase Developmental Team
3. Measure Parent Buy-In
4. Measure Youth Buy-In

Questions?



The background features a teal-to-blue gradient with several circular patterns. A large scale on the left side has markings from 140 to 260. Other circles contain arrows and partial arcs, suggesting a process or cycle.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

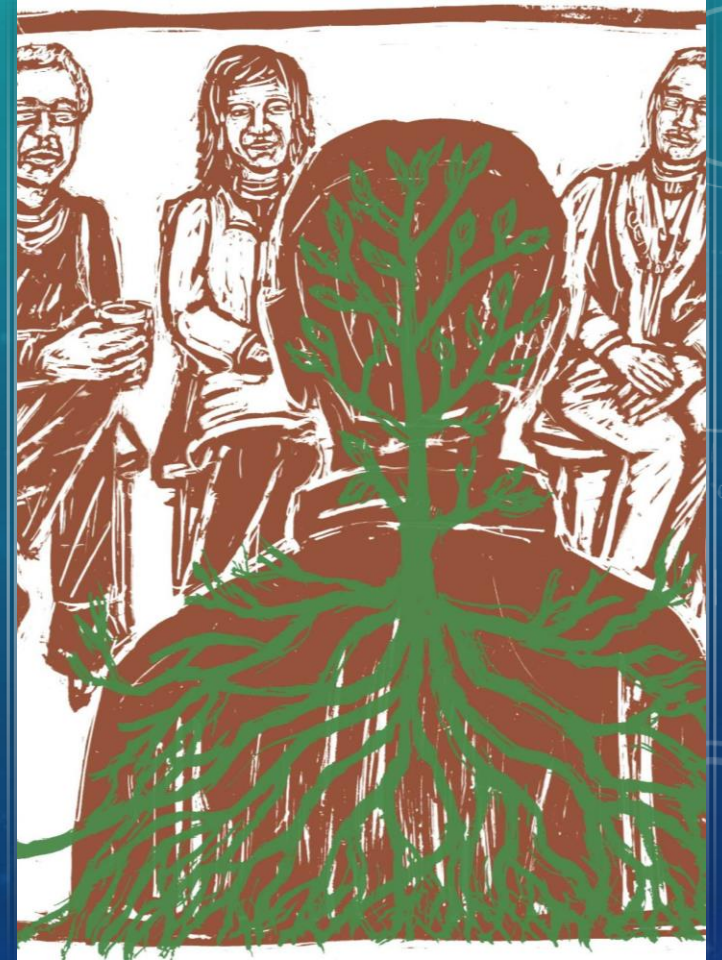
BRINGING THIS TO THE FOREFRONT OF
JUVENILE PROBATION

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative Justice (RJ) is an approach that uses support from family members and the community to discuss what happened between the juvenile offender, the victim, family, and/or community, to create steps towards repairing the harm that occurred. Another goal of RJ is to improve community involvement and prevent juvenile crime by improving neighborhoods and strengthening bonds between community members.

- Helps the youth understand the impact of their behaviors, and accept responsibility,
- Family members and community members can help the youth express remorse, take action to repair damage, and help the youth become a valued member of society.

• *Citation: Nebraska Office of Dispute Resolution*



WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- 43-247.03:(1) In any juvenile case, the court may provide the parties the opportunity to address issues involving the child's care and placement, services to the family, and other concerns through restorative justice practices. Restorative justice practices may include, but are not limited to, prehearing conferences, family group conferences, expedited family group conferences, child welfare mediation, permanency prehearing conferences, termination of parental rights prehearing conferences, juvenile victim-offender dialogue, victim youth conferencing, victim-offender mediation, youth or community dialogue, panels, circles, and truancy mediation. The Office of Dispute Resolution shall be responsible for funding and management for such services provided by approved centers. All discussions taking place during such restorative justice practices, including plea negotiations, shall be confidential and privileged communications as provided in section [25-2914.01](#).

- Definition is vague
- Mostly geared towards DHHS 3(a) cases
- No clear definition of when appropriate, or who receives this information
- No clear evidence to suggest to the Courts that this is a practice that works

BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS A NEW APPROACH TO JUVENILE CRIME THAT CONCEIVES OF CRIME AS AN ACT THAT NOT ONLY HARMS PEOPLE BUT ALSO VIOLATES RELATIONSHIPS IN A COMMUNITY. THUS, RATHER THAN A RETRIBUTIVE APPROACH, IN WHICH THE STATE PUNISHES AN OFFENDER, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES EMPHASIZE HEALING OF THE VICTIM, THE OFFENDER, AND THE COMMUNITY.

-CHRISTOPHER PETERSON, CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND VIRTUES:

- *How this approach is beneficial to Nebraska State Probation?*
- *The ideas of partnering with and restoring juveniles' relationships and protecting the victim of case is the forefront of how probation operates. Restorative Justice is an approach that embodies all the current information and allows probation supervision to be a positive experience that leaves lasting positive effects on the juvenile, the victim, parents, and the community.*

RESTORATIVE ATTITUDES

- We measured restorative attitudes using a scale developed by Dr. Terrill O. Taylor
- Questions included items designed to capture an individual's thoughts on showing empathy, supporting offenders, helping offenders acknowledge wrongdoing, etc. Responses were coded 1 to 5 with 5 demonstrating strong agreement with the statement.
- The average score on RJ attitudes was 80, with individual responses ranging from 29 to 97. Again, higher levels indicates more receptivity to restorative practices and philosophies.

THE DATA

The Sample Size

- 76 members of District #2 Probation, were sent the survey. Of those, 28 completed the survey from beginning to end for a valid completion. For a 36% response rate.
- Sample size was 67.9% female and 25% male, and a 7.1% missing.
- We also asked the role within the probation system. 50% were Probation Officer, 21.4% were management team members, 14.3% assistant probation officer, 10.7% support staff, and 3.6% drug technician.

Sample Size Cont.

- 60% of the sample includes responses from officers assigned to adult supervision and 39.3% were Juvenile Probation Officers.
- Range of employment with Probation was 3 months, to 29 years. One response was unclear.
- Of respondent's, individuals working with Juvenile Supervision had longer tenure with probation. 9.2 years of service compared to Adult supervision at 7.2 years of service.

THE RESULTS

- Management staff had the highest overall levels of RJ attitudes. (87.6)
- Support staff (83)
- Drug techs (83)
- Assistant Probation officers (81.7)
- Officers (76.5)



LESSONS LEARNED

- There is a high degree of restorative justice attitudes within Probation District #2.
- There is not a clear delivery method for restorative justice practices.
- More work is needed to incorporate these practices into daily operations within our district.

CHALLENGES

- There are a limited number of providers that can facilitate mediation/restorative justice practices.
- The providers available mostly focus on 3(a) cases.

NEXT TIME

- Further research would be needed on a statewide basis.
- I would need to explore funding for mediation, that would include the juvenile, victim, and how to gain buy in and participation from community members.



NEXT STEPS

- I plan to work with my chief, to develop a training first and foremost to explain RJ and the benefits that has within our justice system.
- This will include the evidence and research, as well as the benefits, and practical application.
- Following the training will be the implementation of a policy/procedure that outlines the: How, when, and the why.

Questions?



Developmental Immaturity



Cassy Ross

Communications Director, Senator Megan Hunt, Nebraska Legislature

Nebraska Juvenile Justice Certificate, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Summary

Goal: Offer accessible, evidence-based training to staff and senators on adolescent brain development and how it impacts youth's actions. Emphasize brain science and recent scientific advancements that are not yet reflected in the state's policies. End the training by discussing developmental immaturity legal standards, noting reform options in Nebraska and across the nation.

Recent Research Findings on Brain Development & System Involvement

1

Brain Development

2

Self-Control

3

Decision Making

4

Response to Incentives

5

Transitory Behavior

Importance of Developmental Immaturity

Conversation around youth justice has become harsher and more punitive in certain policy discussions

- Nebraska has worked diligently to implement restorative justice practices but still has work to do
 - Only in the past twenty years have most courts started considering the issue of whether juveniles have the right to not be tried while in-competent.
 - Most states (32) have evaluation criteria just for juveniles, and a few of those (3) have broadened the scope to include considerations for developmental immaturity

Important to strike a balance between accountability and rehabilitation in the juvenile justice system and developmental immaturity is an important part of this

Gaudreau, P., Dubé, M., & Giroux, I. (2017). Evaluating the effectiveness of a mindfulness-based intervention program on perceived stress, anxiety, and depression among university students in Canada: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine*, 22(3), 321-329.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2156587216669129>

Juvenile Justice GPS. (n.d.). Competency to Stand Trial. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from <http://www.jjgps.org/juvenile-court#competency-to-stand-trial>

Training Design

Addresses the need for evidence-based, data-driven education with the first steps of tangible action

- Lays a foundational knowledge base for senators and staff
- Connects lawmakers with local experts
- Possibility of an interim study to examine juvenile justice related legal standards with stakeholders and experts

Utilization of implementation science and other evidence-based strategies

- Literature review, identify best practices, tailor content, consult experts, identify barriers, address concerns, evaluate effectiveness, and provide recommendations

Messaging Conflicts

Problematic timing and optics

- Debate of LB574 has discussed youth brain development at length to support banning gender-affirming care for minors
- Office I work for is unequivocally opposed

Advantages in the narrative

- Combined with optics, current legislative discussions and the highly polarized political climate, this training would likely be tied to LB574 - - even if subconsciously and unintended

Lesson on Data, Timing & Politics

Complex and delicate balance

- Data plays a significant role in shaping political decisions, and timing is critical in ensuring that the right decisions are made at the right time.
- Data can be manipulated, misrepresented & 'cherry-picked'

This training has been a first-hand lesson on the impacts and implications of how data can be used strategically to craft a narrative.

- Lead to change in training implementation

This training has been a first-hand lesson on the impacts and implications of how data can be used strategically to craft a narrative.

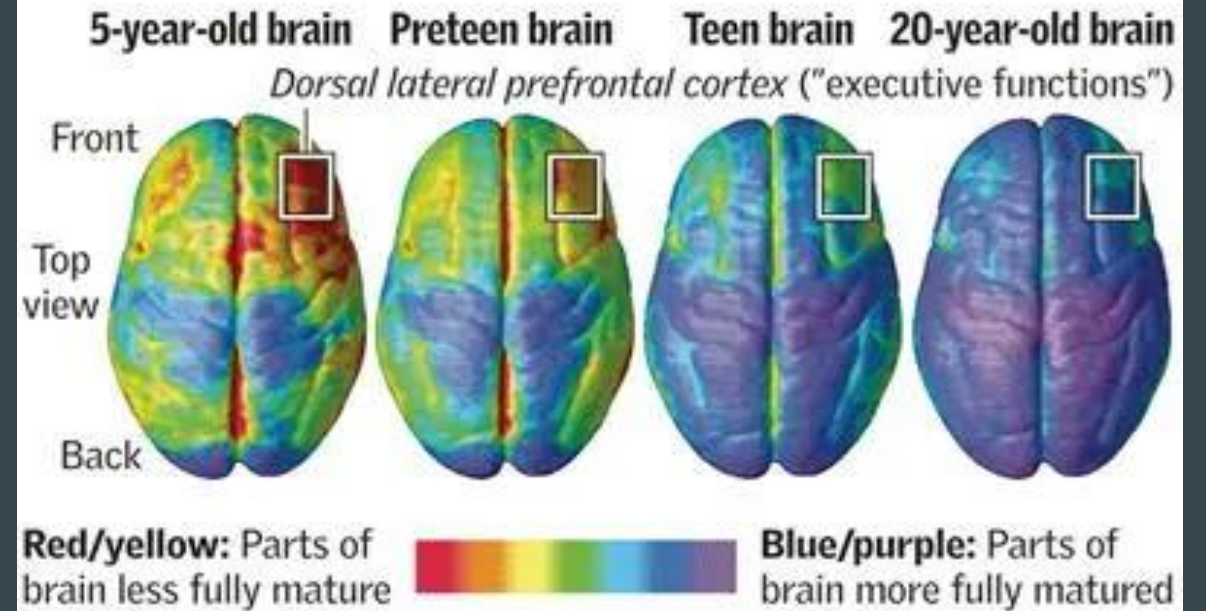
- Lead to change in training implementation

Adolescent Brain Development *(pt. 1 of training)*

- Invited Neuroscientist Hideo Suzuki to present information on brain development
- Highlighting impact of trauma on the brain and changes it causes to behavior
- Gives a concise 'brains 101' overview
- Explains effect of brain function changes on cognitive, emotional, and social development

Judgment last to develop

The area of the brain that controls "executive functions" — including weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses — is among the last to fully mature. Brain development from childhood to adulthood:



Sources: National Institute of Mental Health;
Paul Thompson, Ph.D., UCLA Laboratory of
Neuro Imaging

Thomas McKay | The Denver Post

Developmental Immaturity Legal Standards *(pt. 2 of training)*

Invited Judge Heidemann, Deb Minardi (State Probation Admin), and Spike Eickholt (lawyer) to speak to current legal standards and;

- Shared legal definitions and policy distinctions (*ex. competency vs developmental immaturity vs culpability*)
- Summary current state standards
- Significance of developmental immaturity in legal proceedings
- Standard for determining developmental immaturity
- Balancing of interests + range of dispositions available
- Recent legal developments

Nebraska Specific Efforts *(pt. 3 of training)*

- Invited advocates such as Christine Henningsen (NE Youth Advocates) and Juliet Summers (Voices of Children)
- Important section to relate training to specific NE bill proposals and legislative discussions
 - Will highlight how developmental immaturity relates to current reform issues and where it overlaps with other juvenile justice proposals
- Relate to and discuss current and future juvenile justice reform priorities

LB1059

(2018) NE passed a law to limit ability of prosecutors to charge juveniles as adults. Youth >18y/o can only be tried as adults in cases involving the most serious felonies

How States are Aligning Adolescent Brain Development with Policy

1
Age Boundaries for
Juvenile Court
Jurisdiction

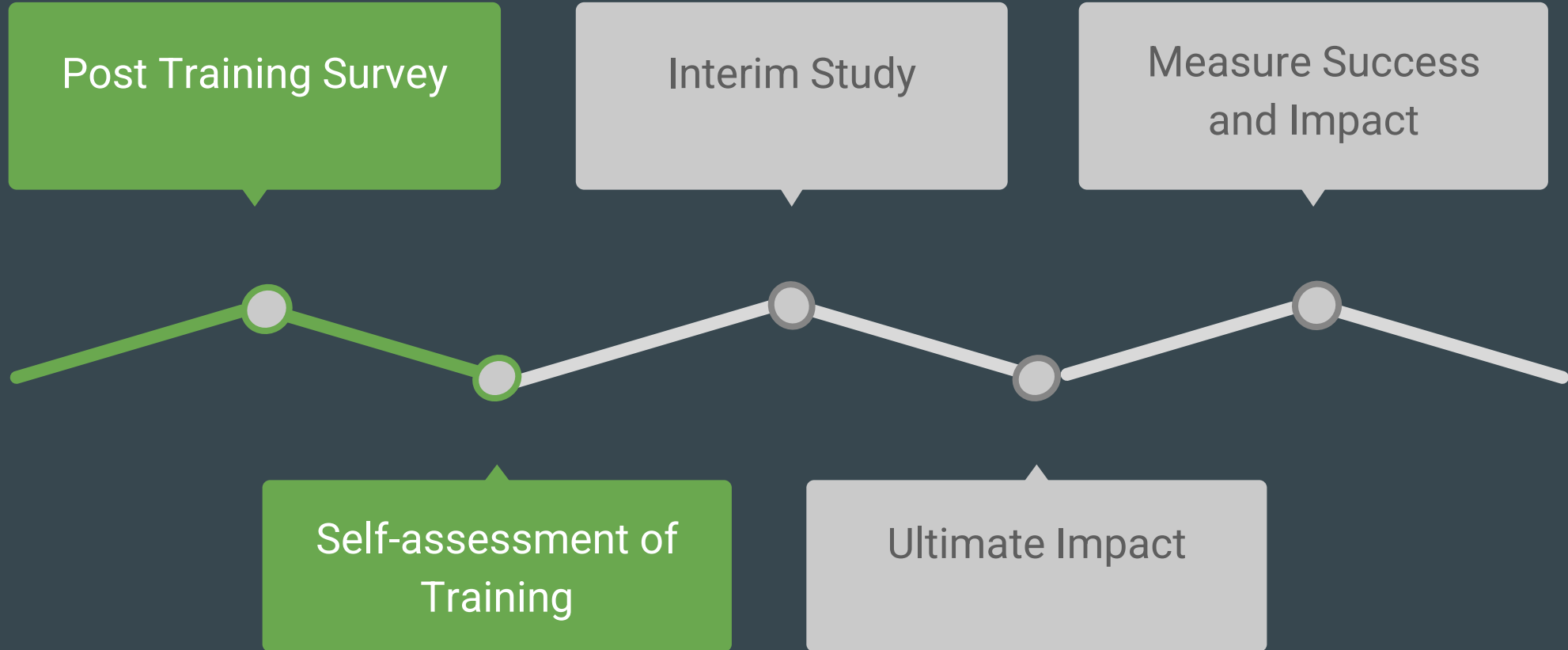
2
Diversion

3
Age-Appropriate
Responses

4
Due Process

5
Reducing Collateral
Consequences

Post-Training Takeaways



Questions?

Questions?





What's next for the JJ Certificate Program?

- **Evaluate and adjust**
- **Year 2 will be hybrid**
- **Youth Engagement enhancement**
- **Restorative Practice enhancement**
- **Increased Motivational Interviewing**
- **Micro-credential and digital badge**
- **Cohort development**

For Questions contact:
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