Webinar: Improving Outcomes for Young Adults in the Justice System

Presenters
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Improving Outcomes for Young Adults in the Justice System

A Review of Key Issues and Considerations

Emily Morgan, Senior Policy Analyst,
Council of State Governments Justice Center
The Council of State Governments Justice Center

Corrections | Courts | Justice Reinvestment | Law Enforcement

Mental Health | Reentry | Substance Abuse | Youth

National nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association of state government officials

Represents all three branches of state government

Provides practical advice informed by the best available evidence
Overview

Why Young Adults Need a Distinct Approach

State Responses to Young Adults

Key Considerations for Criminal Justice Systems
There is Good Reason for Juvenile and Criminal Justice Leaders to Focus on Young Adults

Young adults accounted for nearly **30 percent of arrests** in 2013, disproportionately for **serious offenses**

Young adults accounted for approximately **20 percent of incarcerated juveniles**

Young adults accounted for **more than 21 percent of prison admissions** in 2012, disproportionately these admissions are young men of color

**76 percent** of people under age 25 when released from prison were **rearrested within 3 years**
Young Adults are Developmentally Different From Youth and Older Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Young Adults Are Distinct From Youth</th>
<th>How Young Adults Are Distinct from Adults</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- More cognitively developed⁷</td>
<td>- More impulsive</td>
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<td>- More vulnerable to peer pressure and other external influences</td>
<td>- Less able to control emotions</td>
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<td>- More likely to engage in risky behaviors</td>
<td>- Less likely to consider future consequences of their actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Levels of Education Attainment</td>
<td>• Less access to education, particularly post-secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Challenges</td>
<td>• Fewer vocational skills and less job experience</td>
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| Acute Behavioral Health Needs           | • Certain mental health conditions emerge  
                                         • Substance use peaks                                                                                                                        |
| Transitioning to Independence          | • Independent living and life skills  
                                         • Family relationships and caring adults                                                                                                    |
Overview

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Key Considerations for Criminal Justice Systems
Growing Number of Initiatives Focused on Young Adults in States and Locales Across the Country

Implemented “Youthful Offender” policies that protect young adults from the consequences of a criminal conviction.

Established specialized probation and parole caseloads for young adults.

Created separate facilities for young adults.
Several Barriers Continue to Exist to Improving Outcomes for Young Adults

- Evidence-based programs are **not well-tested** for young adults
- Young adults **age out** of key service systems, and those systems are **not well aligned**
- Disproportionately impacted by **collateral consequences** related to education, employment, and housing
- Systems are not sufficiently **tracking outcomes** for this population
Overview

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Key Considerations for Criminal Justice Systems
Issue Brief Provides Recommendations to Support Young Adults

Highlights how young adults are distinct

Identifies young adults’ distinct needs and summarizes available research on what works to address these needs

Provides recommendations for steps states can take to improve outcomes for young adults.
Recommendation #1: Tailor Supervision and Services to Address Young Adults’ Distinct Needs

Any strategy to improve outcomes for young adults in the justice system should include the following elements:

- Targeted cognitive behavioral approaches
- Career pathways for education and employment
- Targeted mental health and substance use treatment
- Family involvement
- Life skills training
Recommendation #2: Reduce Barriers Across Service Systems

Ensure individual service systems provide as much of a safety net as possible.

Look across systems to ensure consistency in eligibility and alignment in endpoints for care.

Address laws and policies that result in collateral consequences.
Recommendation #3: Improve Data Collection and Reporting

Collect and report at least annually:

- # of young adults in the justice system
- detailed recidivism data, disaggregated by key variables

Connect juvenile and adult criminal justice data systems and improve data sharing among systems that serve young adults
Recommendation #4: Build the Knowledge Base of What Works

- Support rigorous evaluations of existing programs
- Develop and test new, innovative models

Use findings to direct resources
Key Considerations for Criminal Justice Systems to Reduce Recidivism for Young Adults

How should **court policies and practices** be adjusted to support young adults?
- Adjudication and disposition structure
- Existing transfer and youthful offender laws
- Determining sentence lengths

How will young adults be **supervised**?
- Community supervision
- Residential capacity and structure

How will **services be delivered**?
- Tailoring services to young adults’ distinct needs
- Coordination across service systems

How should **state policies be adjusted** to meet the needs of young adults?
- Align age-out policies
- Minimize collateral consequences

How will **data be tracked and analyzed** to assess outputs and outcomes?
Thank You
Join our distribution list to receive CSG Justice Center project updates!
www.csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe
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Intervention Model
and
Performance Management System
Roca’s **Mission** is to disrupt the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping young people transform their lives.

Roca’s **Theory of Change** is that young people, when re-engaged through positive and intensive relationships, can change their behaviors and develop life, education, and employment skills to disrupt the cycles of poverty and incarceration.

Roca’s **Target Population**
- Young men
- 17-24 years old
- Justice Systems Involved or Juvenile Justice Systems involved who are assessed as high risk for long term adult criminal justice system involvement
- No work history
- Not ready for change; cannot or will not participate in other programs
Stages of Change
Change is a process that happens over time and in stages that include:

• Pre-Contemplation = NO
• Contemplation = MAYBE
• Planning = GETTING READY
• Action = ACTING DIFFERENTLY
• Sustaining = MORE THAN 51%

As change is often difficult for any of us, **Relapse** is often part of the process and can happen at any point.

**Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT)**

• CBT asserts that thoughts, behaviors, and emotions are interconnected
• Thus, CBT skills target thoughts, behaviors, or emotions in order to affect positive change on the other components (e.g., changing distorted thinking may lead to healthier emotions and more effective behaviors).
What we think affects what we do and feel!

What I Think (Thoughts)
- Skill 7: Flex your Thinking
- Skill 9: Weigh all your options
- Skill 10: Setting priorities straight

What I Feel (Emotions)
- Skill 1: Calling out your emotions
- Skill 3: Emotion/Urge Surfing
- Skill 4: Being present
- Skill 5: Acceptance

What I Do (Behaviors)
- Skill 2: Pleasant events
- Skill 6: Acting in line with values
- Skill 8: Approach! Don’t Avoid!

What we do affects what we think and feel

What we feel affects what we do and think
Roca’s Intervention Model

Roca’s Intervention Model is a cognitive behavioral intervention that includes 4 strategic components:

**Relentless Outreach & Follow-Up** all the time

**Transformational Relationships**
- Youth Workers, Educators, Crew Supervisors
- All Staff

**Programming** (drop in, structured, formal)
- Life Skills (CBT, Healthy Habits, Circles)
- Education/Pre Voc (Literacy, HSE, ESL, Pre-Vocational Training)
- Employment (Transitional Employment, Workforce Readiness, Job Placement)

Work with **Engaged Institutions**
- Formal and Informal Systems Change
Results Framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>06-18 Months From Enrollment</th>
<th>18-24 Months From Enrollment</th>
<th>24-48 Months From Enrollment</th>
<th>Post Completion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increase Life Skills</td>
<td>Increase Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>Reduce Technical Violations</td>
<td>Reduce Re-Incarceration Rates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programming Engagement</td>
<td>Increase Educational Gains</td>
<td>Reduce Arrests For New Offenses</td>
<td>Sustain Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase Employment Gains</td>
<td>Increase Employment Retention</td>
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<td>Programming Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase Program Retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase Engagement with Staff</td>
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Data Collected

• Central Intake / Risk Assessment
• Baseline and Follow-Up Roca Change Assessments
• Staff Caseloads
• Staff Engagement
• Programming Engagement
• Workforce Readiness Assessments
• Educational Assessments
• Educational Attainments
• Employment Records
• Criminal Involvement Records
• Staff Supervisions
In FY15, Roca served 659 participants across three sites in Boston, Chelsea, and Springfield Massachusetts.

- **84%** or 556 out of 659 of participants enrolled were still actively engaged

Of those enrolled **21 months or longer:**
- **84%** or 153 out of 182 were placed in unsubsidized employment. (76% remained employed)
- **92%** or 131 out of 143 who had the opportunity to retain employment for 90 days successfully did so.
- **87%** or 118 out of 136 who had the opportunity to retain employment for 180 days successfully did so.

Of those enrolled **24 months or longer:**
- **93%** or 155 out of 166 did not get arrested for a new offense
- **98%** or 163 out of 166 did not get incarcerated for a new offense
Molly Baldwin

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