A DIFFERENT LENS: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Santa Cruz County Probation Department
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OVERVIEW

- Define Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Juvenile Justice
- Review our core operating principles and how PYD compliments and enhances them
- See how these principles, when matched with the PYD framework improve justice system outcomes
- Discuss how we have collaborated with CBOs to help increase opportunities for success
The concepts of positive youth development suggest that nearly all youth are capable of growing up properly and avoiding trouble if they can be attached to a variety of social resources that facilitate healthy development and discourage harmful behavior.

The PYD framework is an alternative to viewing adolescent development through the lens of problems and deficits.

- The deficit-based approach dominated developmental theory and social policy during much of the twentieth century.
- About 12 years ago we started training all officers on “strength-based and asset based approaches”
  - Working together with partners we brought in trainers-Laura Bernie- Nissen, Michael D Clark
PYD MAKES SENSE

- PYD is a set of strategies which any program or program model can adopt to help guide youth on a successful transition to adulthood.
- It is an approach that provides youth with the broadest possible support, enabling them to attain desirable long-term outcomes, including economic self-sufficiency and engagement in healthy family and community.
- Some people in our field have trouble recognizing this important PYD concept: The PYD perspective recognizes that some youth grow up in circumstances that do not equip them for the transitions into adulthood.
3 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

 1. Focus on strengths and assets rather than deficits and problems.
  ☀ PYD focuses on building assets, skills and competencies

 2. Strengths and assets are usually acquired through positive relationships, especially with pro-social and caring adults.

 3. The development and acquisition of youth assets occurs in multiple contexts and environments.
  ☀ PYD sees youth development opportunities in all of the worlds adolescents inhabit:
    ☀ Schools, work, neighborhoods, communities, CBOS
Deterrence has been a prevailing model

- Systems that are based on this model tend to focus on deterrence oriented programs that focus on discipline, surveillance or threat of punitive consequences-Boot camps, scared straight, etc)
PARADIGM SHIFT

- We made deliberate shifts in practices:
  - Strength based focused
  - When developing programs we ask how can we help youth develop:
    - Competencies
    - Character
    - Positive Connections
    - Caring and Compassion
  - Expanded our partnerships to include intensive day treatment programs, wraparound, evening centers, family resource centers
HOW DOES PYD FIT IN WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION?

- EBP
- JDAI
- MST
- DMC
- FFT

Alphabet Soup
PYD is a framework, not a program. All the above should support PYD
What are your guiding principles or platforms for system change?

- Ours was System of Care and JDAI. Both of the core principles prioritize collaboration, least restrictive levels of care and providing racially and culturally responsive programming.

Any system reform should/must rely on collaboration with community and CBO’s:

- Santa Cruz has been a model site for JDAI for than a decade.
- We implemented 8 core strategies to reduce reliance on detention.
CHANGE IS NOT EASY

- We had resistance related to objective decision making, heard things like “kids are getting way with too much”
- One major challenge has been the overcome some resistance to providing kids with basic things such as:
  - Rides to court, incentives, rides to appointments, Rides to school
    - “Why should we help them when they are court ordered to do this...we are enabling them”
ENABLING OR JUST DOING WHAT MAKES SENSE?

- The PYD perspective recognizes that some youth grow up in circumstances that do not equip them for the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- We as leaders did not give up-keep up pressure
  - Constant messaging of values, trainings, Improved recruitment process, USCS classes, Social Work, Internships
These results would not have been possible without collaboration
Early on we have had an active community and community based agencies
We had to be a transparent system
   Could have ignored constructive criticism, said: we don’t need help, things are fine
DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP W/CBO’S

- Similar to dating or a courtship
  - First date
    - What are you about?
    - What do you?
    - What do you believe in?
- If you are interested, you have a second date....
  - Maybe an office visit
  - Meet their staff
  - Talk about past relationships.....you get the idea
SHARING THE FUNDS

- A little bit of $$$ goes a long way with CBOs
- RFP’s always ask for collaboration
  - Caveat: Collaboration needs to have indicators that are measurable
- We have a long history of writing grants together, developing programs, hiring each others staff...writing in positions for each other agency
TRUST IS KEY

- I used to hear PO’s say this...
  - I know what is best for my kids
  - These are our kids
  - Wasn’t that person in the system a while back???
- We can’t do it alone
  - We need their expertise
  - Insight
  - Experience
  - Remind them of why we got into this line of work to begin with-to help people
    - Often the first jobs for many of our partners get are in the helping field and with good procedures we can help them. We have mentored several through good and bad times
- Bring them to the table...don’t move too fast. Is this is a good fit?
HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE A MATCH?

- Racially and Culturally Responsive Programming-It has to be intentional
  - This is a big part of what we are looking for
  - Staffing programs with adults who are bilingual and bicultural
  - Staffing the program with adults who have close community ties and life experiences that help them relate to youth
  - Working with several CBOS’ whose staff is bilingual and bicultural and closer in age to the youth at the evening center
  - Locating the program where they are accessible
PROGRAM EXAMPLES

- Azteca Soccer Program
  - Coaches as Mentors
  - Family Involvement
- Our Evening Center is an example where many the elements of our justice reform efforts comes together:
  - PYD, JDAI, SOC, EBP, Racial and Culturally Responsive Programming
LESSONS LEARNED

- Think outside traditional partnerships;
- Build and cultivate relationships;
- Keep the trust in the relationships – be transparent and honest;
- Truly understand and honor what each partner brings to the collective; Remember that what works best for kids should always be a path explored;
- TAKE A RISK !!! You might be pleasantly surprised.
Elias Gonzales
Community Restoration Project

A Program of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.
Key Characteristics of a Positive Youth Development Approach
Focus on strengths and assets rather than deficits and problems
Strengths and assets are usually acquired through positive relationships, especially with pro-social and caring adults.
The development and acquisition of youth assets occurs in multiple contexts and environments.
Questions?

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Santa Clara County Probation Department
in Partnership with the Santa Clara County Office of Education Alternative Schools

“Embracing Opportunity”
Our Clients
A significant reduction in reliance on secure detention has been observed over the years.

### Juvenile Hall Population
- March 12, 2007: 306
- March 12, 2012: 154

Eliminated 150 Detention Beds

### Secure Care Facilities Population
- James Ranch and Wright Center
- March 12, 2007 - Wright Center Closing: 105
- March 12, 2012: 54

### Division of Juvenile Justice Population
- FY99: 345
- FY05: 108
- FY12: 14

Alt text: 3 graphs show a significant decline in Juvenile Hall, Ranches, and DJJ Population.
Custodial beds are intentionally diminishing

Courts and Probation Officers have a lack of effective responses to new law violations or probation violations

Many Juvenile Justice youth are failing in a variety of school settings

Schools struggle with getting youth to attend

Due to closure of custodial capacity, some Probation staff and COE teachers are at risk of lay-off
GOOD TRENDS
WRAPAROUND SERVICES

"THE FAMILY IS VITAL TO THE TREATMENT PROCESS"
FAMILY VIEWED AS "EXPERT, STAFF SERVE AS FACILITATORS"

530% Utilization Increase
STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON SECURE DETENTION

- Implementation of Seven Challenges Program for substance abuse treatment in custody and in the community
- GRID: Guiding Responsive Informed Decisions – a response for probation violators
- Expansion of alternatives to incarceration:
  - The EDGE
  - Enhanced Electronic Monitoring: RESULT: Success rate of 74%
  - WRAP Around services
  - Many specialized caseloads that allow youth intensive treatment in their homes
Inventory.... Identify target population:
- Older, mostly male youth of color with gang ties, substance use and poor school success
- What is working now with this population and why? Ranch with a relationship focused, treatment environment
- How could we replicate this in a non custodial setting?
  - Look to our natural partners:
    - SCCOE, D/A, Mental Health, CBO’s
GETTING OUR DUCKS IN A ROW

- Clear and Shared Vision
- Constant Communication
- Putting in the Right Staff
- Living in Each Other’s Worlds – Stakeholder Meetings – Budget Understanding
- Willingness to Modify and Adjust as Needed
- Unwavering Leadership on Both Sides.... There is no “can’t” only “how to.”
Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Education

The Probation Department and the Santa Clara County Office of Education Alternative Education Department partnered to create a Comprehensive Day Treatment Center
STEPS TO DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

- Design Together
- Full Transparency
- Trust
- Identify Non-negotiable issues: mixture of rival gangs in program
- Clear expectations
- Clear roles
- Enough time to plan
- Understand each others challenges
- Invest in cross-training
CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY FOR PROBATION

- Who Should Staff the Program? Union Issues
- How do we navigate the roles between Probation and SCCOE?
- How do we transport the youth?
- How do we make it cost effective?
- How do we manage mixed gang youth in a community setting?
- How do we gain Judicial “buy in?”
Primary Concerns of stakeholders (e.g. School Board, Community Members, SCCOE Staff, Justice Partners)

- Blending of gang affiliated youth
- Co-location of high level juvenile justice youth with students not involved in JJ system
- Fiscal implications
FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR CO-LOCATING

- Safety of all students and staff
- Ability to Locate EDGE in separate classrooms on school site
- Accessible transportation: Location of bus and light rail stations
- Ability of staff to work different days and hours
- Cost neutral for SCCOE
Youth enrolled in EDGE receives daily a full comprehensive school curriculum. Typical youth in the program is 15+ years of age, credit deficient, gang affiliated, and has a history of delinquency and has failed in a less intensive treatment environment.
CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

- Highly Qualified Classroom Teachers
- Educational Assistants in Each Classroom
- Formative Assessments to Guide Instruction
- On-site Mental Health and Drug Counseling
- Academic Counseling
- Online Credit Recovery
- CTE Classes:
  - Graphic Arts
  - Construction
CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

- Field Trips (Ski Trip/Cirque De Soleil/SF Academy of Sciences/Walden West/Job Fairs/Colleges)
- Gang Intervention
- ART (Aggression Replacement Training)
- Collaborative approach (Parents/Probation/SCCOE)
- Life/Ethical Decision Making/Pro-Social Skills
- CAHSEE/GED Prep
- Team Building Approach (Sports League/High Ropes Course/Group Process)
CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

- Have Continued to Manage Youth with Opposing Gang Affiliations
- Many Youth say that Practicing Their Skills Nightly Works
- Youth are Experiencing Academic Success – Many for the First Time
- Team Environment
- Truly Therapeutic
- More Family Involvement
- Seamless Services Between Treatment and Academics
- Have earned the trust of JJ Stakeholders
NEXT STEPS

- Evaluate Current Program
- Focus on Judicial “Buy-In” for Repeating the Program
- Listen to Youth Input
- EDGE the Sequel?
  - Immediate Step-Down from the Enhanced Ranch Program – South County?