

An Evaluation of Ohio's Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative: A Closer Look at Success - Executive Summary

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Prevention Research and Education



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Background

- ❖ Juvenile justice-involved youth with serious behavioral health issues often have inadequate and limited access to care to address their complex and multiple needs.
- ❖ Ohio’s Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiative was designed to provide youth aged 10-18 evidence- and community-based behavioral health treatment in lieu of detention.
- ❖ BHJJ was funded through a partnership between the Ohio Departments of Youth Services (ODYS) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University provided evaluation services for the program.

Methodology

- ❖ In the past, BHJJ evaluation reports consisted of two parts – 1) a statewide report that combined data from all projects across the state and 2) individual county reports. These reports generally consisted of presenting pre- and posttest differences on a number of behavioral health surveys and measures as well as providing data on recidivism.
- ❖ The emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020 significantly impacted both the operation of the BHJJ program and the associated data collection, resulting in incomplete and missing project data. In consultation with stakeholders from the Ohio Departments of Youth Services (ODYS) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), the evaluation team developed a new approach to the traditional BHJJ outcomes report.
- ❖ The main goal for this report was to provide information to the state and the individual projects about the characteristics and patterns of youth identified as successful and unsuccessful completers.
- ❖ The data used for this report reflects youth who were enrolled in and terminated from BJJJ between January 2014 and September 2019.
- ❖ The BHJJ dataset contains thousands of variables, and an examination of each variable was not possible or prudent.
- ❖ In order to narrow the focus of the report, we examined a subset of data points that 1) the literature has identified as potentially related to success, 2) project stakeholders, including both state agency funders and local BHJJ stakeholders were interested in, and 3) local behavioral health experts suggested may predict completion status.
- ❖ This reporting period is beneficial for three main reasons. First, it allows us to focus on project data that may be more reflective of the current state of the project. Second, this window enables us to have enough data in most counties to conduct statistical analyses or at least show

trends in the data. Third, these data were collected prior to COVID-19 and are more complete than data collected during the pandemic.

- ❖ Twelve counties participated in BHJJ during the evaluation window: Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Holmes, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Summit, Trumbull, and Wayne.

Demographics and Youth Characteristics

- ❖ Between January 2014 and September 2019, 1,589 youth enrolled in and terminated from the BHJJ program across all participating counties.
- ❖ The majority of youth were male (66.7%) and either White (46.0%) or Black (44.6%).
- ❖ The average age of youth entering the program was 15.5 years old.
- ❖ Montgomery County accounted for the most youth in the analyses (n=655) while Mahoning County accounted for the fewest (n=20).

Completion Status

- ❖ Of the 1,589 youth who enrolled and terminated BHJJ in the evaluation window, 69.0% successfully completed BHJJ.
- ❖ Females (72.8%) had a significantly higher successful completion rate than males (67.1%).
- ❖ White youth (75.6%) had a significantly higher successful completion rate than Black (62.9%) or Multiracial (65.3%) youth.
- ❖ Youth between the ages of 10-14 had a similar successful completion rate (68.7%) as youth 15 years and older (69.1%).

Completion Status and Custody Arrangement

- ❖ At enrollment into BHJJ, more than half of youth (57.9%) were in the custody of their biological mother only and 17.7% were in the custody of two parents, at least one of which was a biological parent.
- ❖ Youth in the custody of adoptive parents had the highest success rate (74.3%) followed by youth in the custody of two parents, at least one of which was a biological parent (72.4%).
- ❖ While successful completion rates varied by custody status, no statistically significant difference in successful completion rates across custody status categories was found for all the data combined, across males and females, and across races.
- ❖ The only statistically significant association between custody status and successful completion rates were for youth aged 15 and older. This means that for youth aged 15 and older, the custody status they were in at intake significantly impacted their successful completion rate.

Completion Status and Annual Household Income

- ❖ 18.9% of families enrolled in BHJJ reported an annual household income of \$5,000 or less and 64.4% of families had an annual household income below or near the federal poverty level for a family of four (\$25,750).
- ❖ 62.2% of BHJJ families who reported an annual household income of less than \$5,000 completed the program successfully, while approximately 90 percent of families who reported an annual household income of \$75,000 or greater completed the program successfully.
- ❖ There was a significant relationship between annual household income and successful completion rates.

- ❖ There was a significant relationship between annual household income and successful completion rates for both males and females and for youth aged 10-14 and youth aged 15 and older.

Completion Status and Physical and Sexual Abuse Histories

Physical Abuse

- ❖ At enrollment, 12.7% of caregivers reported the youth had experienced physical abuse.
- ❖ Overall, there was no significant difference in the successful completion rates for youth with (66.3%) and without (69.3%) previous physical abuse.
- ❖ There was a significant difference in successful completion rates for Black youth with (45.3%) and without (64.4%) previous physical abuse. This relationship was not found for White or Multiracial youth.

Sexual Abuse

- ❖ At enrollment, 12.6% of caregivers reported the youth had experienced sexual abuse.
- ❖ Overall, there was no significant difference in the successful completion rates for youth with (69.8%) and without (69.2%) previous sexual abuse.
- ❖ Analysis found no significant relationship between previous sexual abuse status and successful completion rates across gender, race, or age groups.

Completion Status and Academic Achievement

- ❖ Youth who received mostly ABCs at termination from BHJJ had a significantly higher successful completion rate (85.5%) than youth who received mostly CDFs at termination from BHJJ (57.1%).
- ❖ Females who received mostly ABCs at enrollment into BHJJ had a significantly higher successful completion rate (81.2%) than females who received mostly CDFs at enrollment (66.5%).
- ❖ White youth who received mostly ABCs at enrollment into BHJJ had a significantly higher successful completion rate (83.2%) than White youth who received mostly CDFs at enrollment (71.2%). No relationship was found for Black or Multiracial youth.
- ❖ For both age groups, youth who entered BHJJ earning mostly ABCs had significantly higher successful completion rates than youth who entered BHJJ earning mostly CDFs.

Completion Status and Suicide History

Suicide Talk

- ❖ At enrollment, 37.3% of caregivers reported the youth talked about suicide in the past.
- ❖ Overall, there was no significant difference in the successful completion rates for youth who did (67.9%) and did not (70.6%) talk about suicide.
- ❖ Analysis found no significant relationship between suicide talk history and successful completion rates across gender, race, or age groups.

Suicide Attempts

- ❖ At enrollment, 15.1% of caregivers reported the youth had at least one previous suicide attempt.
- ❖ Overall, there was no significant difference in the successful completion rates for youth who did (69.5%) and did not (66.1%) have a previous suicide attempt.
- ❖ Females with no previous suicide attempts had a significantly higher successful completion rate (76.6%) than females with a previous suicide attempt (62.5%).
- ❖ White youth with no previous suicide attempts had a significantly higher successful completion rate (77.3%) than White youth with a previous suicide attempt (66.9%).

Completion Status and Co-Occurring Disorders

- ❖ At enrollment, 43.9% of youth were diagnosed with a co-occurring disorder (both a mental health and substance use disorder).
- ❖ Youth without co-occurring disorders had a significantly higher successful completion rate (70.4%) than youth with co-occurring disorders (60.5%).
- ❖ Males and females without a co-occurring disorder had significantly higher successful completion rates than males and females with a co-occurring disorder.
- ❖ Black and White youth without a co-occurring disorder had significantly higher successful completion rates than Black and White youth with a co-occurring disorder.
- ❖ Across both age categories, youth without a co-occurring disorder had significantly higher successful completion rates than youth with co-occurring disorders.

Completion Status and Prior Felony Charges

- ❖ 32.6% of the youth in BHJJ were charged with at least one felony in the 12 months prior to their enrollment.
- ❖ Overall, there was a significant association between the number of felony charges in the 12 months prior to their enrollment and successful completion rate. For example, 70.3% of youth without a prior felony in the 12 months prior to their BHJJ enrollment completed successfully while 54.5% of youth charged with four or more felonies in the 12 months prior to their BHJJ enrollment completed successfully.
- ❖ There was a significant association between the number of felony charges in the 12 months prior to BHJJ enrollment and successful completion rates for youth aged 10-14, but not for youth 15 years and older.

Completion Status and Contact with Police during BHJJ

- ❖ Staff estimated that 71.3% of BHJJ youth decreased their contact with police during the program and 6.0% of BHJJ youth increased their contact with police during the program.
- ❖ Overall, there was a significant association between change in police contact while in BHJJ and successful completion rate. Of the youth who decreased their police contact while in BHJJ, 84.0% completed the program successfully. Of the youth who increased their police contact while in BHJJ, 18.1% completed the program successfully.
- ❖ Across gender, race, and age groups, youth who decreased their police contacts while in BHJJ had significantly higher successful completion rates compared to youth who maintained or increased their police contact.

Completion Status and OYAS Risk Level

- ❖ 26.6% of youth were assessed as low risk to recidivate, 46.5% were assessed as moderate risk, and 26.9% were assessed as high risk.
- ❖ Overall, there was a significant association between OYAS risk level and successful completion rate. 78.0% of low-risk youth completed BHJJ successfully while 56.7% of high-risk youth completed BHJJ successfully.
- ❖ Across gender, race (White and Black youth), and age groups, as OYAS risk level increased, successful completion rates significantly decreased.

Completion Status and Ohio Scales at Enrollment

Problem Severity

- ❖ Problem severity scores significantly improved from enrollment (26.7) to termination (16.0).
- ❖ Youth who entered BHJJ with low problem severity scores had a significantly higher successful completion rate (81.2%) than youth who entered BHJJ with high problem severity scores (67.2%).
- ❖ Across gender, race (White and Black youth), and for youth aged 15 years and older, youth with lower problem severity scores at enrollment had significantly higher successful completion rates than youth with higher problem severity scores at enrollment.

Functioning

- ❖ Functioning scores significantly improved from enrollment (41.5) to termination (51.3).
- ❖ Youth who entered BHJJ with high functioning scores had significantly higher successful completion rates (79.2%) than youth who entered BHJJ with low functioning scores (63.7%).
- ❖ Across gender, for Black youth, and for youth aged 15 years and older, youth with higher functioning scores at enrollment had significantly higher successful completion rates than youth with lower functioning scores at enrollment.

Logistic Regression

- ❖ A logistic regression was conducted to examine the impact of all the variables contained in the report on successful completion.
- ❖ The test of the model was significant, as it was able to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful completers. The model also identified six significant predictors of successful completion.
- ❖ Nonwhite youth had a 69% decrease in the odds of completing successfully compared to White youth.
- ❖ Youth who scored High on the OYAS had a 133% decrease in the odds of completing successfully compared to youth who scored Low.
- ❖ Youth whose police contact either stayed the same or increased during BHJJ had an 809% decrease in the odds of completing successfully compared to youth whose police contacts were reduced during BHJJ.
- ❖ Youth who earned mostly ABCs at termination from BHJJ had a 201% increase in the odds of successful completion compared to youth earned mostly CDFs at termination.
- ❖ For each one-point improvement in problem severity and functioning score at enrollment, the odds of successful completion increased 2% and 3% respectively.