



ISSUE BRIEF

# SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

## Is there an effective practice model for **serving crossover youth?**<sup>1</sup>

Youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems — commonly referred to as crossover, dually-involved, dually-adjudicated, dual-system, or multi-system youth — require a special level of focus. Crossover youth require attention because their involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is associated with higher risks for: mental health, educational, and vocational challenges; higher rates of recidivism; longer stays in detention; and poorer placement stability and permanency outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the quality and consistency of the casework services provided to crossover youth leave them more vulnerable to placement in restrictive settings, such as group homes, and without strong permanency planning activities in place.<sup>3</sup> Crossover youth also require special protection to shield them from the legal consequences of an adjudication of delinquency. Depending on the nature of the crime and specific laws in a jurisdiction, the adjudication could have negative, lifelong implications that will impact employment options and a prior record score if they subsequently get arrested later in life.

In 2010, with support from Casey Family Programs, the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University developed the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) to address the needs of crossover youth.<sup>4</sup>



# Is there an effective practice model for serving crossover youth?

## Facts about crossover youth

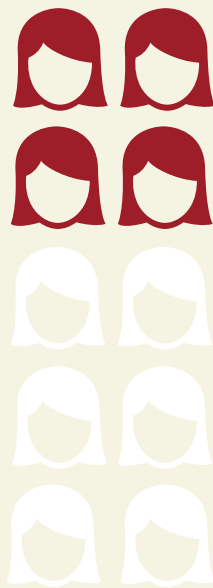


# 92 PERCENT

of crossover youth are first involved in the **child welfare system**.<sup>5</sup>

# 40 PERCENT

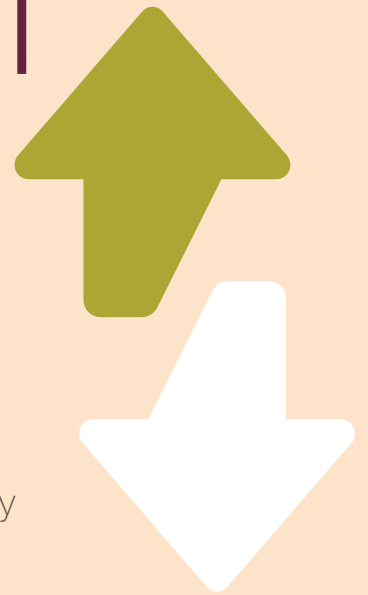
of crossover **youth are female**, which is disproportionately high compared with the general juvenile justice population.<sup>7</sup>



# 47 PERCENT

## GREATER RISK

**Maltreated youth are at a higher risk** for becoming involved in delinquency than youth from the general population.<sup>6</sup>



# 56 PERCENT

of crossover youth are **African-American**, which is disproportionately high compared to their peers from other racial groups.<sup>8</sup>



# 83 PERCENT

of crossover youth have challenges with **mental health or substance abuse**.<sup>9</sup>

# Is there an effective practice model for serving crossover youth?

Research suggests that the best way to support the needs of crossover youth is to develop a comprehensive approach that involves integrated services from multiple systems including child welfare, juvenile justice, law enforcement, education, behavioral health, and the courts.<sup>10</sup> Multi-system collaboration is essential and must minimally include coordinated case management, joint assessment processes, coordinated case plans, and coordinated case supervision. The CYPM provides a roadmap for making systemic changes that involve these youth-serving systems. More than 100 counties in 21 states have implemented or are in the process of implementing the CYPM, with training and technical assistance supports from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.

## What is the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)?

### Goals, values, principles, and themes

The CYPM includes a variety of evidence-based programs and best practices that, when implemented, aim to achieve four overarching goals:

1. Safe reduction in the number of youth placed in out-of-home care
2. Reduction in the use of congregate care
3. Reduction in the number of youth crossing over and becoming dually-involved
4. Reduction in the disproportionate representation of youth of color, particularly in the crossover population

Some aspects of the CYPM can be adapted for an individual jurisdiction; however, many features must be implemented with fidelity. All practices, policies, programs, supports, and services in the CYPM are rooted in the following fundamental values, principles, and themes:

- Youth and families have **strengths** and should be treated as unique individuals.
- Systems must utilize timely, **integrated data** to make all policy and practice decisions.
- **Workforce efficacy** needs to be strengthened and staff at all levels should be trained and supported appropriately to build their knowledge and capacity to implement the model.
- **Family engagement** means building working relationships with families and including youth and family voices in all decision-making, planning, and casework.
- **Permanency** planning is a key focus and begins at case initiation.
- **Disproportionality** rates among crossover youth are higher for youth of color and females; therefore, key decision points and alternatives to detention must be examined through this lens.
- **Sharing information** across systems is critical and issues must be addressed early on and throughout a case.

The Crossover Youth Practice Model is a strengths-based model that ensures family engagement and equitable treatment at every level of the system.

# Is there an effective practice model for serving crossover youth?

- **Alignment** of services through coordinated case management allows for improved effectiveness of service delivery and the achievement of common goals.
- Understanding, accessing, and **coordinating resources** leads to more efficient and effective services.

## Three phases of the CYPM

The CYPM is divided into three phases. Each phase identifies policies, programs, and practices that will enhance how a community supports crossover youth. A full listing of the required elements is provided in [The Crossover Youth Practice Model Abbreviated Guide](#).

### PHASE I

During phase one, it is essential to **bring together top-level leadership** from the participating agencies (presiding judge from the family court, chief probation officer/director of juvenile services, and the director of the child welfare agency). This team must be deeply committed to the model and actively involved in its implementation. Because of the complexity involved in this model, an **implementation team** is also required. This team must include individuals representing the following organizations/populations: judiciary, juvenile justice, child welfare, education, mental health, substance abuse, youth, parents, law enforcement, attorneys, and Court Appointed Special Advocates. During this phase, jurisdictions should identify

opportunities to prevent youth from crossing over into the juvenile justice system. The first phase of the model focuses on two areas:

- **Arrest, identification, and detention:** Studies indicate that crossover youth are detained more often and for longer periods than youth without child welfare involvement.<sup>11</sup> Effective practice includes educating all professionals who work with crossover youth about the differences between youth involved with the child welfare system and their peers, so that they become aware of the inequities and understand that they are being asked to treat the youth fairly, equitably, and individually. They are not being asked to give crossover youth an unfair advantage.
- **Decision-making regarding charges:** Charging decisions can change a youth's trajectory. Effective practice includes evaluating and exploring the possibility of changing the way charging decisions are made by working with prosecutors and defense attorneys to develop strategies around information-sharing so that those parties making charging decisions have the benefit of the youth's history and understanding of what led to the incident in question.

### PHASE II

Once a youth crosses over, joint assessments and coordinated case planning are required across systems. Policies and procedures will need to be in place to



# Is there an effective practice model for serving crossover youth?

support the coordination and communication between everyone involved in supporting the youth, including:

- **Joint assessment and planning:** The child welfare and juvenile justice caseworkers should immediately begin working together with the youth and his or her family.
- **Case assignment:** Decision-making related to the case within and across systems must be coordinated.
- **Court structures:** Jurisdictions are strongly encouraged to use either a dedicated docket or a one judge/one family approach to improve coordination and handling of cases.
- **Multi-disciplinary joint assessment process and coordinated case planning:** A coordinated plan for the youth and his/her family or caregiver is developed by compiling information from across systems (including consideration of mental health, substance use, and educational needs) and holding family-centered interagency discussions of this shared information. These discussions lead to the development of a coordinated case plan to guide the coordinated case management services.
- **Placement of crossover youth:** Research has shown that placement in group care is a contributing factor to youth crossing over from child welfare to juvenile justice, and that such placements are generally not the most effective form of intervention for crossover youth. All too often, youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system end up in congregate care as their first placement in out-of-home care because of an arrest history. Jurisdictions must examine their use of congregate care and adopt best practices to achieve a reduction in its use. Jurisdictions should work with community providers to develop a flexible array of resources that respond to the needs and strengths of youth and families, not their label.

## PHASE III

In this final phase, agencies coordinate an ongoing assessment of youth and family progress and jointly implement the case plan, making adjustments as needed. Additional activities include:

- **Ongoing assessment of progress:** Those involved in serving the youth and family (including, at a minimum, the child welfare and juvenile justice caseworkers, placement provider, community-based providers, school personnel, and kin) take an active role in determining the efficacy of the case plan and bringing any issues to the team for problem resolution.
- **Planning for youth permanency, transition and case closure:** Effective child welfare and juvenile justice caseworkers work collaboratively to support youth to achieve permanency and effectively transition upon case closure.
- **Permanency planning:** Permanency planning begins at the onset of serving every youth and family. All practices supported by the practice model (e.g., permanency roundtables and benchmark conferences) aid in achieving the goal of full reunification.

## Evidence to support the CYPM<sup>12</sup>

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University has conducted internal evaluations on the model and two other universities have conducted external research evaluations that have demonstrated the model's efficacy. Results indicate that the CYPM is having a positive impact on identification, case management, and improved outcomes for crossover youth. Use of the CYPM led to early identification of crossover youth, at significantly higher rates than those who received practice as usual. Involvement in extracurricular and structured activities, and contact with family and parents, also increased for youth who experienced the practice model. Additionally, when compared to pre-practice model youth, youth involved in the practice model were:

# Is there an effective practice model for serving crossover youth?

- Slightly more likely to have their cases dismissed or receive diversion, and less likely to receive probation supervision or placement in corrections.
- Three times more likely to receive a promising practice, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, or Wraparound services.
- Less likely to live in congregate care settings.
- Less likely to have Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a permanency goal.
- More likely to have “remain at home” as a permanency goal.
- More likely to have one or both cases (child welfare and/or juvenile justice) closed.
- More likely to show improvements in mental health.

## Jurisdictional implementation

Examples of jurisdictional experiences, outcomes, and lessons learned can be found at:

- [Creating an Integrated Continuum of Care for Justice-Involved Youth: How Sacramento County Collaborates Across Systems](#) (2017)
- [Crossover Youth: Los Angeles County Probation Youth with Previous Referrals to Child Protective Services](#) (2017)
- [Joint Protocol of The New York City Family Court, The Administration for Children’s Services, and the Department of Probation](#) (2015)

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, information in this document was gathered from materials provided by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (<http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/our-work/crossover-youth-practice-model/>) and personal communication with Macon Stewart, Senior Program Manager, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, December 20, 2017.
- 2 Caietti, C.M., Gaines, K., & Heldman, J. (2017). “Improving outcomes for dual status youth,” presented at the Beyond the Bench Conference, December 19, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB24-2G-00PPT.pdf>
- 3 Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). NO PLACE FOR KIDS: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/No%20Place%20for%20Kids%20final%20%281%29.pdf>
- 4 <https://cjjr.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CYPM-Abbreviated-Guide.pdf>
- 5 Haight, W., Bidwell, L., Choi, W.S., & Cho, M. (2016). An evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM): Recidivism outcomes for maltreated youth involved in the juvenile justice system. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 6, 578-85.
- 6 Haight, W., Bidwell, L., Choi, W.S., & Cho, M. (2016). An evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM): Recidivism outcomes for maltreated youth involved in the juvenile justice system. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 6, 578-85.
- 7 The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy. (2017). *The Crossover Youth Practice Model: A Summary of Evaluations*.
- 8 The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. (2017).
- 9 The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. (2017).
- 10 Haight, W., Bidwell, L., Choi, W.S., & Cho, M. (2016). An evaluation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM): Recidivism outcomes for maltreated youth involved in the juvenile justice system. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 6, 578-85.
- 11 Haight, W., Bidwell, L., Marshall, J.M., Khatiwoda, P. (2014) Implementing the Crossover Youth Practice Model in diverse contexts: Child welfare and juvenile justice professionals’ experiences of multisystem collaborations. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 39, 91-100.
- 12 Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. (2015). *THE CROSSOVER YOUTH PRACTICE MODEL (CYPM): An Abbreviated Guide*. Retrieved from <https://cjjr.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CYPM-Abbreviated-Guide.pdf>
- 13 Research briefs and articles are available on the CJJR website: <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/resources/publications/>

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