



## CROSSOVER YOUTH PRACTICE MODEL

CENTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

working across systems of care georgetown university

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy has worked since 2007 to address the unique issues presented by children and youth who are known to both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These young people, often referred to as “**crossover youth**,” move between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, or are known to both concurrently.

A disproportionate number of them are youth of color and girls, and the population as a whole generally requires a more intense array of services and supports than other youth known to each system individually.

While the exact number of crossover youth may vary across jurisdictions, research has established that youth who have been maltreated are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The development of the **Crossover Youth Practice Model** was designed to better address the issues these youth present and meet their needs.

### The Practice Model

The model, now introduced into over **110 counties across the country**, describes the specific practices that need to be in place within a jurisdiction in order to reduce the number of youth who crossover between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the number of youth entering and reentering care, and the length of stay in out of home care.

The CYPM infuses into this work **values and standards; evidence-based practices, policies and procedures; and quality assurance processes**. It provides a template for how jurisdictions can immediately impact how they serve crossover youth and rapidly impact outcomes. It provides a mechanism whereby agencies will strengthen their organizational structure and implement or improve practices that directly affect the outcomes for crossover youth. This includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- ✓ *The creation of a process for identifying youth at the point of crossing over*
- ✓ *Ensuring that workers are exchanging information in a timely manner*
- ✓ *Coordinating case assessment, planning and management;*
- ✓ *Including families in all decision-making aspects of the case;*
- ✓ *Ensuring that detention or institutional care bias is not occurring at the point of detention or disposition for crossover youth*
- ✓ *Maximizing the services utilized by each system to prevent crossover from occurring.*

### Overarching Goals

Each jurisdiction is provided on and off-site technical assistance leading to the development of cross-system case management protocols and a plan to evaluate their implementation. Among other goals, this support is designed to help jurisdictions...

- ✓ **Reduce youth placed in out-of-home care**
- ✓ **Reduce the use of congregate care**
- ✓ **Reduce the disproportionate representation of children of color**
- ✓ **Reduce the number of youth crossing over and becoming dually involved.**

### Areas of Impact

There are also system processes and outcomes we anticipate the model will impact, including...

#### Reductions in:

- ⬇ The number of youth re-entering child welfare from juvenile justice placement
- ⬇ The penetration of the juvenile justice system by youth in foster care
- ⬇ The use of out-of-home placements
- ⬇ The use of congregate care as a placement
- ⬇ The use of pre-adjudication detention
- ⬇ The rate of recidivism

#### Increases in:

- ⬆ The inclusion of family voice in decision making
- ⬆ The use of diversion as an appropriate case disposition option
- ⬆ Youth and Parent satisfaction with the process
- ⬆ The use of joint assessments
- ⬆ The use of interagency information sharing



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## Implementation of the Practice Model

Participating in the practice model will allow each jurisdiction to create a seamless process from case opening to case closing that improves outcomes for crossover youth. Implementation of the model ensures that practices are consistent for all youth within a system and resources are shared between the systems to maximize their impact. The model also emphasizes the importance of developing cross systems data capacity and the need to use good data to make program and policy decisions.

The practice model is introduced to sites in three phases.

### Phase I



#### **Arrest, Identification, and**

**Detention:** This phase addresses the handling of a case from the point of arrest or citation. Protocols will be developed and instituted to ensure that crossover youth are identified and an appropriate assessment is occurring following the detention/intake decision. It also emphasizes the early engagement of family and cross-system workers engaging with the family when the arrest occurs.

#### **Decision-Making Regarding**

**Charges:** This aspect of the model addresses the need for a cross-systems team approach when a youth involved in the child welfare system has been arrested and the decision is being made whether the case should be filed and referred to the court or diverted from the juvenile justice system. It further emphasizes the use of a team approach that includes the family at all decision-points.

### Phase II



#### **Joint Assessment and**

**Planning:** This phase has a strong emphasis on a variety of case management functions to be performed in a cross-systems manner, court operations for streamlining judicial oversight, and service delivery including but not limited to the use of evidenced-based practices.

### Phase III

#### **Coordinated Case**

**Management and On-going Assessment:** This phase builds on the capacity created in Phase II as it focuses on strengthening the use of a cross-systems approach in working with families post-adjudication. This includes improving the educational and behavioral health supports provided across the two systems, and enhancement of community engagement.

#### **Planning for Youth Permanency, Transition, and Case Closure:**

This aspect of the model focuses on permanency and case closure. It looks to enhance the permanency planning that occurs throughout the case and improving permanency outcomes for crossover youth. It also stresses the importance of engaging community supports to ensure a safe transition from the system for all youth.



## Evaluation

Three different academic institutions have evaluated the CYPM: California State University at L.A., University of Minnesota and University of Nebraska at Omaha. In each instance the CYPM has been proven to be effective in both changing system behavior and population level outcomes for both crossover youth and their families. In 2018, the California Evidenced Based Clearinghouse ranked the CYPM as a Promising Practice with high relevance to child welfare.

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