


## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE TRANSITION OF YOUNG OFFENDERS TO COMMUNITY SETTINGS


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“[I will need help] making my own food and like just going outside, being in public, job applications . . . just simple things. They’re going to be hard . . . like even doing my own clothes, it’s going to be hard ‘cause I haven’t done it in a long time.”  
Unruh, et al., 2009

### Family

I’ll need support from my family [when I get out]– for them to be stable enough so I don’t have to worry about other things like taking care of where I’m going to sleep, where I’m going to eat that night; just so I know that things are set and I won’t have to worry about those things.  
Unruh et al., 2009



### Peers



“Meeting up with your old friends, getting caught up again, you know. Kinda comes down to self-control though. If you have enough control to meet back up with them and try to be clean... the old people do the old behaviors. I think that will be hard.”  
Unruh, et. al., 2009

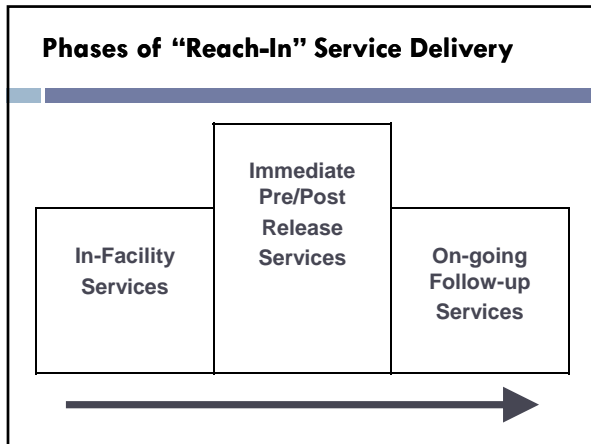
### Project STAY OUT Model: Strategies Teaching Adolescent Young Offenders to Use Transition Skills

- Provision of facility-to-community transition services for incarcerated youth with disabilities (SPED or mental health disorder)
- Key staff person: Transition Specialist
- Works closely with POs, OVRS counselors, and other community agencies
- Interagency collaboration between
  - schools,
  - juvenile justice,
  - behavioral health,
  - vocational rehabilitation
  - Workforce Development
  - Other community agencies based on unique needs of youth

### Essential Features of a “Reach-In” Service Delivery Model

- Individualized to Unique Needs of Youth
- Competitive Employment
- Flexible Educational Opportunities
- Targeted Social Skills Training
- **Immediate** Access to Age appropriate Support Services Driven by Unique Needs of Individual

(Bullis & Cheney, 1999)

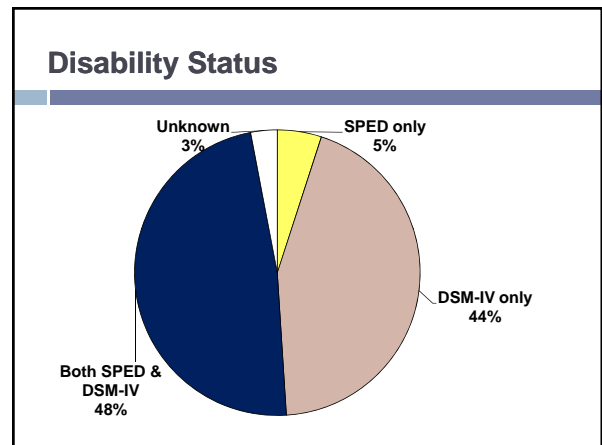


### Evaluation Model

- **Process:** Ongoing identification of barriers and supports to service model
- **Participant Outcomes:** Provides both formative and summative information

### Demographic Information

- Average age at entry of participants is 17.4
- App. 81% of participants are male & 19% female
- App. 30% of participants represent an Ethnic Minority Status



### Barriers-to-Transition

- Participants averaged app. 8.5 barriers
- Approximately 75% of all participants reported history of:
  - Substance Abuse (79%)
  - Absenteeism/Suspension from School (79%)
  - Prior history of foster home placement (66%)
  - Running from Home/Residential Placement (65%)

### Criminal History

- 65% of participants were adjudicated at 14 or younger
- Multiple crimes were committed by youth
- 1<sup>st</sup> offense was property-related (52%)
- 1<sup>st</sup> offense was person-related (40%)

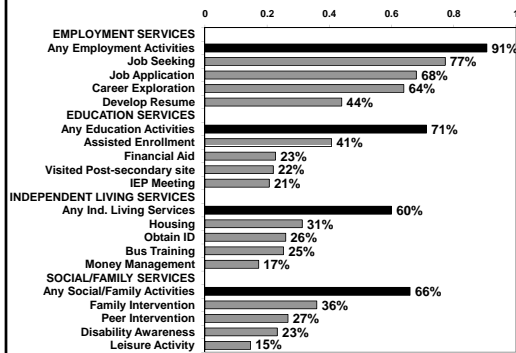
### Gender Differences

- Young women are *more likely* to possess the following barriers to transition:
  - ▣ History of Running Away from Home/Placement (2.79)
  - ▣ History of Suicide Risk (2.75)
  - ▣ History of Abuse (2.44)
  - ▣ Parenting Responsibilities (3.67)

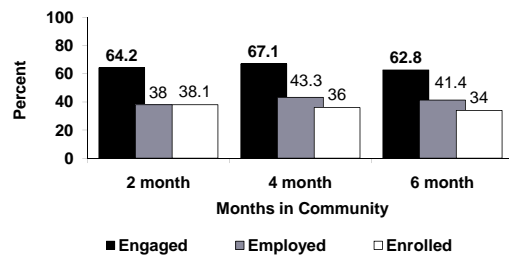
### Gender Differences

- Young women are *less likely* to possess the following barriers to transition:
  - ▣ Have Learning Disability (5.08)
  - ▣ Retained a grade (3.11)
  - ▣ Unable to maintain job (2.82)
  - ▣ Have ADHD (2.98)

### Primary TS Activities



### Outcomes



### Implications for Practice

- ▣ **Individual**
  - ▣ **Target:** Increase good decision-making/locus of control/self-regulation skills
  - ▣ **Intervention:** Access to continued Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and other identified mental health services in the community
  - ▣ **Intervention:** Develop youth's self-determination and self-advocacy skills

### Implications for Practice

- ▣ **Family/Living Environments**
  - ▣ **Target:** Improved familial emotional support
  - ▣ **Intervention:** Increased family and youth support services in the facility & community
  - ▣ **Intervention:** Ensure services are culturally appropriate
- ▣ **Target:** Improved independent living skills
- ▣ **Intervention:** Increased access to graduated Independent Living Programs upon release

### Implications for Practice

- **Peer Relationships/community**
  - **Target:** Increased pro-social networks
  - **Intervention:**
    - Natural supports may develop through new friend sets in school, vocational training, employment
    - Develop pro-social networks by engaging youth in healthy community activities related to interests, strengths, hobbies

### Implications for Practice

- **Employment**
  - **Target:** Increased rates of employment,
  - **Intervention:** Develop targeted employment services (e.g., WIA, VR)
  - **Intervention:** Job matching based on youth's strengths/barriers to employment
  - **Intervention:** Employment-related social skills

### Implications for Practice

- **Education**
  - **Target:** Increased rates of engagement in education
  - **Intervention:** Match education program to interests and academic needs of youth
  - **Intervention:** Provide flexible educational opportunities (e.g., GED, training, high school completion)

### Implications for Practice

- **Community Capacity Building**
  - **Target:** Increase multi-agency collaboration
  - **Intervention:**
    - Develop state and/or localized MOUs
    - Development & dissemination of Screening & Referral Process (e.g., sharing of information across agencies)
    - Education of **ALL** local partners
    - Regular planning meetings with multiple agencies
    - Use of formative evaluation data to review project services

## Questions?