

**Family Integrated Transitions (FIT):**  
 Reducing Juvenile Justice  
 Recidivism in a Cost-Effective Manner  
 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference  
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 Presented in Tampa, March 2007*

## Presentation Overview

- History and context of transitional services for youth exiting secure residential placements
- FIT intervention specifics
- Outcome data
  - Recidivism
  - Cost-Benefit
- Next steps

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## Recidivism in WA

- Within 3 years of release from Washington's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, 68-78% of youth were convicted of new felonies or misdemeanors
  - Felonies were >50% of total
  - Violent Felonies account for about 20% of total

(Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006)

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## Transition service planning for juvenile offenders

- Integrated transition services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, financial assistance, and school placement, are rare
- Transition planning, post-release mental health services, receipt of financial assistance are associated with lower rate of re-offending at 6 month follow-up

(Trupin, Turner, Stewart, & Wood, 2004)

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## Beginnings of FIT: A recognized need for transition services

- 2000: Washington State Legislature initiated pilot rehabilitation program for youth with co-occurring disorders who are transitioning back to the community from JRA
- Directed that independent evaluation be carried out by Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)

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## Senate Bill 6853

Juvenile offenders receive treatment that is:

- Research-based
- Integrated
- Individualized mental health and chemical abuse treatment
- Family-centered
- Community involved
- Low caseloads
- Home or residence-based services
- Time-determinate to the extent possible
- Focus on peer and social structures
- Decreases factors associated with reoffending
- Increases factors associated with prosocial contacts and behaviors

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## Family Integrated Transitions (FIT)

- A family- and community-based treatment for youth with:
  - Co-occurring mental health and substance abuse diagnoses
  - Being released from secure institutions in Washington State's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration

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## Targeted Impacts

- Lower risk of re-offending
- Connect youth with appropriate community services
- Achieve youth abstinence from drugs/alcohol
- Improve mental health status and stability
- Increase prosocial behavior
- Improve youth's educational level and vocational opportunities
- Strengthen family's ability to support youth

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FIT is predicated upon the notion that treatment is most effective if all of the factors that sustain a problem behavior are addressed in an *integrated* manner



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## FIT Integrated Treatment Model

- Multisystemic Treatment (MST) is the foundation
- Incorporates and builds on JRA Integrated Treatment Model, especially:
  - Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
  - Anger Replacement Training (ART)

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FIT builds on skills developed while incarcerated, focuses on generalization

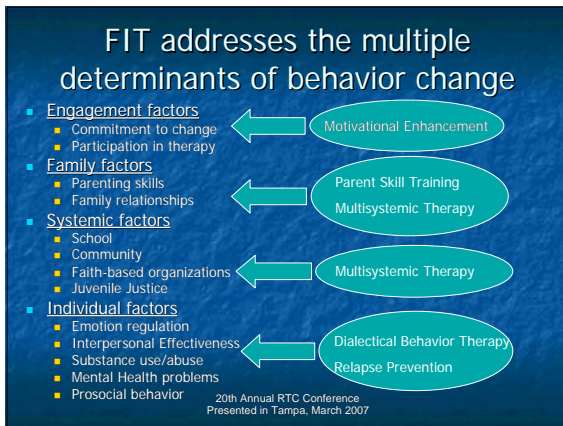
- JRA Integrated Treatment Model: framework for treatment planning
  - Use of evidence based approaches to treatment
  - Cognitive-behavioral basis
  - Coping Skill development: DBT
  - Functional analysis of behavior
  - Building commitment to change through motivational enhancement

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## Elements of FIT

- Focus on engagement of multiple systems involved in supporting youth's successful transition
- Youth and family are assessed to determine unique needs; services are individualized
- Treatment focuses on family strengths, and on goals set by the family
- Attention to generalization

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- ### FIT: Target Population Inclusion Criteria
- Ages 11 to 17 at intake
  - Substance abuse or dependence disorder AND
  - Axis I Disorder OR currently prescribed psychotropic medication OR demonstrated suicidal behavior in past 6 months
  - At least 2 months left on sentence
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- ### FIT Teams
- 3-4 therapists per team
    - 3-5 families per therapist at any given time
    - Frequent contact with the family, especially early on, to establish engagement and structure
  - 1 supervisor per team (0.5 FTE)
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- ### FIT Oversight
- Weekly group supervision with supervisor
  - Individual supervision as indicated
  - Weekly telephone consultation with FIT consultants
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- ### FIT: Treatment
- Begins 2 months before release to allow time to prepare family and systems to support successful transition
  - Therapist meets with family at least once per week
  - Therapist on call 24/7
  - Treatment takes place in the community where the youth lives
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- ### The FIT Manual
- Chapter 1: Overview of FIT, goals of program
  - Chapter 2: Description of theory and practice of key therapeutic approaches
  - Chapter 3: Therapist's Toolbox
  - Chapter 4: Referral and Engagement
  - Chapter 5: Pre-Release Multisystemic Interventions
  - Chapter 6: Parent Behavioral Skills Training
  - Chapter 7: Pre-Release Sessions
  - Chapter 8: Homecoming
  - Chapter 9: Maintenance
  - Chapter 10: DBT skills
  - Chapter 11: Barriers and Solutions
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## Therapist's Toolbox

- Contains information on a variety of techniques from different intervention approaches that are to be employed throughout the intervention
  - Fit circles
  - Behavior Chain Analysis
  - Readiness rulers
  - Pros and Cons
  - Goal setting
  - Interaction techniques
  - Commitment strategies
  - Mindfulness exercises
  - Diary card
  - Educational handouts

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## FIT Evaluation Outcomes

- Recidivism (UW DPBHP & WSIPP)
- Cost-benefit (WSIPP)

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## Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)

- Established in 1983
- The Institute's mission is to carry out practical, non-partisan research—at legislative direction—on issues of importance to Washington State
- The Institute conducts research using its own policy analysts and economists, specialists from universities, and consultants
- Institute staff work closely with legislators, legislative and state agency staff, and experts in the field to ensure that studies answer relevant policy questions.

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In 1990's, at the behest of the Washington State Legislature, WSIPP started to:

- Evaluate programs to decrease crime and the cost of crime to taxpayers and crime victims
- Develop models to estimate the cost of crime to taxpayers and crime victims
- Do not consider other program effects such as substance use, educational outcomes, or scores on assessment tools

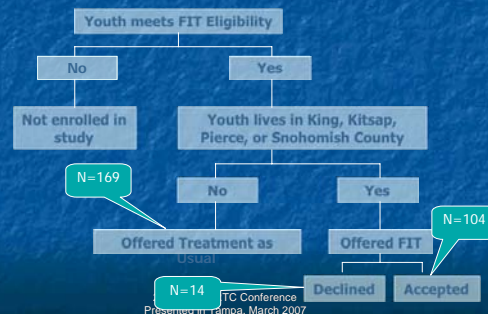
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## FIT Eligibility Criteria

- Under 17 ½ years old
- In JRA institution
- Scheduled to be released to four or more months of parole supervision
- Substance abuse or dependence
- One or more of the following:
  - Any Axis 1 disorder (excluding youth with only diagnoses of Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Paraphilia and/or Pedophilia); or
  - Currently prescribed psychotropic medication; or
  - Demonstrated suicidal behavior within the past 3 months

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## Matched Control Research Design



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## FIT Program Evaluation Design and Methods

To account for non-random assignment and differences between groups, data analytic strategies included:

- 25% reduction in the estimated effect of the FIT program on recidivism while calculating cost-benefit ratio
- Stratified the survival analysis to account for proportionally more African American youth in the FIT sample compared with the Control group

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## Selection Biases between treatment groups?

- There is a possibility of differences between FIT participants and comparison
  - 88% of eligible youth received FIT (non-participating youth might be different)
  - Families in different geographical areas might face different circumstances (i.e., counties eligible for FIT were more metropolitan – containing Seattle and Tacoma)

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## Differences between FIT group and Comparison group

- FIT participants more likely than comparison youth to
  - Identify as African American
  - Have a prior property offense
  - Have higher Initial Security Classification Assessment (ISCA) scores (JRA tool for measuring risk for re-offense)
- FIT participants less likely than comparison youth to identify as Latino
- No significant differences in age at release, age at first conviction, gender, prior drug convictions, criminal history, prior violent convictions, or Native American ethnicity
- Arguably, FIT group more prone to re-offend

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## Outcome variable: Recidivism

- Obtained through statewide database
- Conviction rates for juvenile or adult offenses
- Follow-up period of 36 months post-release
- Conviction classifications
  - Total recidivism: misdemeanor + felony
  - Felony recidivism
  - Violent felony recidivism

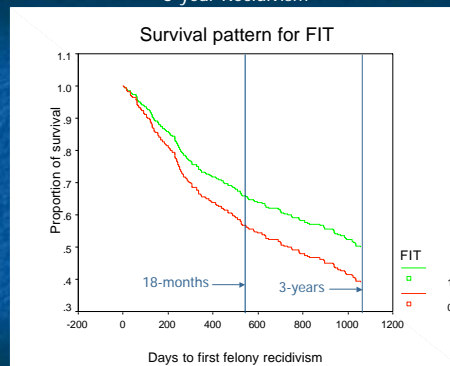
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## Effects of Participation in FIT on 36-month Recidivism

- Utilized stratified Cox regression to adjust for unequal distribution of African American youth in the FIT sample
- Percent that did NOT have a felony conviction 36 months post-release:
  - FIT participants: 45.0%
  - Comparison: 37.4%
  - Youth in FIT 30% less likely than youth not in FIT to have felony recidivism
  - Wald=4.26, p=0.039, hazard ratio=.697
- Total recidivism (p=0.506) and violent felony recidivism (p=0.521) did not yield statistically significant differences between groups

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## 3-year Recidivism



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## FIT Benefit-Cost Analysis

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## FIT Benefit-Cost Analysis

- Total cost of FIT per participant: \$9,665
- Benefits to taxpayers in criminal justice savings per participant: \$19,502
- Benefits to non-participants from avoided criminal victimizations per participant: \$30,708
- Total savings per participant = \$50,210
- Net gain per participant = \$40,545

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## FIT Benefit-Cost Analysis

- Benefit-to-Cost Ratio: (Total Benefit/Total Cost) = (\$40,545/\$9,665) = \$4.20

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## Next Steps

- Randomized controlled trial of FIT
  - Reduce/eliminate potential geographic and socio-demographic confounds present in current study
- Reaffirm findings as they relate to cultural minorities
- Examination of psycho-social impacts of FIT intervention (move beyond recidivism)

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## WSIPP Citations

- FIT Outcome Evaluation
  - S. Aos, M. Miller, and E. Drake (2006). *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
    - <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/06-10-1201.pdf>
- WSIPP Models for the Cost of Crime
  - S. Aos, R. Lieb, J. Mayfield, M. Miller, & A. Pennucci (2004). *Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention for youth, Technical Appendix*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
    - <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/04-07-3901a.pdf>

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## OJJDP Model Programs

- Rating: Effective
- Can be found on-line at:  
[http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/TitleV\\_MPG\\_Table\\_Ind\\_Rec.asp?id=710](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=710)

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