Screening Within Juvenile Justice to Identify Service Needs Across the System of Care

Tampa

Cross System Needs of Youth
- At least one in five youths served by the juvenile justice system have a mental health disorder, even when conduct disorder is excluded (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002).
- The Juvenile Access and Assessment Center (JAC) is the point of access for services for adjudicated juveniles in Detroit-Wayne County.
- Correct Course receives prosecutors’ referrals for enrollment as an alternative to prosecution.
- The JIFF screening tool provides the basis for agreeing to alternative services, determining the need for more critical and intensive services, and selecting a service type to more specifically meet the needs of each youth and family.
- Youths are then assigned to a Youth Assistance Program (YAP) and other Mental Health Services.

Role of JIFF & CAFAS in a System of Care

What is Correct Course?
- Correct Course is an alternative to adjudication
- Youth are referred to Correct Course for Juvenile Inventory For Function (JIFF) assessment
- Completion of the Youth Assistance Program means no record
- For first time offenders, low risk offenders
- Youth benefit from:
  - A skills assessment
  - Youth Assistance Program
  - No juvenile record
  - Timely, appropriate needs based services

JIFF
- Developed for juvenile justice, child welfare, educational settings, primary care
- Assesses youth’s functioning across settings
- JIFF is self-administered, via computer, with the questions and response options “read” to the youth or caregiver
- Youth and caregiver versions available
- Used to determine need for mental health
- Pros
  - Does not require professional to gather data or administer
  - Does not require formal training
  - Can be used to generate a Service Plan
  - “Cross-walks” to CAFAS (facilitates referral to mental health)
- Downside:
  - Screens only, does not require clinical assessment by professional

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JIFF: Q & A

- How?
  - A brief interview in the youth and caregiver's own words

- Purpose?
  - To connect families and youth to resources in community
  - To identify youth in need of more intensive supports or evaluations
  - To assist in generating an integrated service plan to track services across the "system of care"
  - To assess outcome

Q & A: Informant Versions

- Who is the informant?
  - Two versions
    - Caregiver Informant
    - Youth Informant
  - Parallel forms with some differences in wording and organization of questions
  - Do I have to administer both versions?
    - No
    - Separate versions because in some settings the youth is most readily available while in others, it is the caregiver
    - This is a screening instrument, so further evaluation can be justified by either informant — caregiver or youth
  - Reading level: 2nd to 3rd grade for youth version; 3rd to 4th for caregivers

JIFF Subscales

- At School/ Your Job
- Your Feelings
- At Home
- Dealing with Bad Feelings
- Family Life*
- Alcohol & Drugs
- You & Your Friends
- Thinking
- You & Your Neighborhood
- Your Health

Organization of Questions within Subscales

- Questions are organized within domains of functioning (subscales).
- Subscales start with asking about strengths first, followed by questions about potential problems.
- Open-ended questions provide an opportunity for the youth to "tell their side of the story."
- On the caregiver version, at the end of each subscale, the caregiver rates the child’s needs.
  - Example: How much does you child need help in school? Scale is 0 to 5

At School

Would anyone at school say that you:
- Hit others?
  - Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
- Threaten others (or other people are afraid of you)?
  - Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
- Do not do what you are told?
  - Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
  - Other:
    - Yes
    - Maybe
    - No

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At Home
This section asks questions about how you are doing in the home that you live in now.
What is the best thing about your home or your family?

JIFF Service Plan

Bar Graph Example
Youth’s Self-Report: % of Problems Endorsed by Domain

Example “Pre-Programmed” Goals for School
Address Academic Needs
- Improve Attention or Reduce Impulsivity
- Improve Poor Grades
- Cease Aggression or Intimidation and Increase Appropriate Expression of Feelings
- Improve Social, Interpersonal, or Physical Skills
- Increase Behavioral Compliance at School
- Increase School Attendance
- Pursue GED or Return to School

Family Court Chief Prosecutor
- It is working...here is how it works for us...
  - Traditional Role of Assistant Prosecutor
    - Chief Law Enforcement Officer of County
    - Gatekeeper of JJ cases into system
  - This Program is Unique
    - Non-traditional role of assistant prosecutor
    - Attorneys dedicated to program
    - Accurate screening is critical
    - What we look for
    - Types of cases referred to Correct Course Program
    - Partnership as the foundation

Value of JIFF for Prosecutor
- Why is it important
  - Standardized information
  - Faster processing from charge to service
  - Identifies service needs
  - Engages youth and family in participation
  - Catches concerns at early stages – ages
  - Emphasizes youth responsibility & community safety
  - Fosters communication between agencies

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What the JIFF tells the Prosecutor

- JIFF mirrors what Prosecutor sees
- Identifies Concerns regarding prior JJ contact
- In-custody vs Not-in-custody cases
- Fits youth exhibiting "gateway" behaviors
  - SA use
  - Negative peer association
  - Assault behaviors emerging
  - Non-compliance at home
  - Non-compliance at school

JIFF Application Producing Results

- Access to Mental Health – Substance Abuse Treatment
- Access to Wrap-around and PMTO
- Reduces unnecessary detainment & improves system efficiency
- Initial Outcomes Good - Low recidivism thus far

Summary of JIFF Findings

Is the JIFF Working as Intended?
Is the JIFF Useful in Juvenile Justice?

Data to date from Juvenile Justice in Wayne County January, 2008

Sample Description

- N = 723 youths
- Age Range: 8 – 19, Mean: 14.99
- Gender: 71% Male
- Race
  - African American, 69.6%
  - Caucasian, 24.1%
  - Other, 6.4%
- Custody Status
  - In custody: 62.4% in detention
  - Not in custody: 36.2% of youth were petitioned and JIFF administered at the end of court appearance. First offenders only.

Q1. Is there a lack of bias and are results consistent with literature?
Answer: Yes

- Race
  - No bias (Caucasians report more substance use)
- Gender
  - Consistent with literature
  - Girls report more family concerns and emotional symptoms (e.g. depression, self-harmful potential)
- Custody Status
  - In Custody (IC), compared to Not in Custody (NIC) youth, report more school problems, negative peer influences, gang involvement & substance use

Q2: Are youth willing to report problems?
Answer: Yes.

These youths report problems consistent with the literature. Furthermore, disproportionate need for referral for specific services is not present.

- School
  - 51.5% report truancy
  - 84% report having a D or an F on their last report card
  - 53% report being suspended from school
  - 26% report being expelled from school
- Noncompliance at Home
  - 30% to 35% admit to leaving home without permission, missing curfew, or going forbidden places
- Substance Use
  - 25% to 30% confirm alcohol use
  - 35% to 42% confirm use of other drugs
Q2: Are youth willing to report problems?
Continued...

- Mental Health Related Needs
  - 15% confirm feeling depressed “all the time” or “a lot”
  - 8% report self-harmful thoughts
  - 15% report feeling anxious “all of the time” or “a lot”
  - 18% to 27% report past trauma
    - Of those traumatized youth, 32% to 54% report still being bothered by the past trauma
- Family Environment (behavior by others in home, not youth)
  - 24% report discord in the home
  - 10% to 15% report domestic violence, others being drunk or doing drugs, physical illness, and possible mental illness.
- Health Related Needs
  - 7% to 30% report various needs (e.g., needs to see a doctor, dentist, eyes checked, sex education, smoking cessation services)

Q3: What is the correspondence between youth and parent report?

Answer: In general, caregivers’ report of problems is similar to the youths’ report (based on 328 matched pairs of youth and caregivers)
- However, caregivers do tend to endorse more problems than youths do
- Notable exceptions, in which youths tend to endorse more problems than caregivers:
  - Fire setting
  - Aggressive, threatening behavior in the community
  - Self harmful thoughts and suicide attempts
  - “Still bothered” by past traumas
  - Undesirable behavior by others in the home - domestic violence, use of drugs or alcohol, and other “child welfare” concerns

Q4: Do caregivers want help for their children and their families?

- For each subscale, caregivers rated their need for help
- Rating ranged from:

  0 = No Help Needed
  1 = Help Needed
  2 = Much Needed

Q5: Is the JIFF sensitive to change over time?

Answer: Yes.

Based on sample of 44 youths, with JIFFs administered pre and post community interventions, 4 months apart.

- Youths & caregivers report significant improvement on the
  - JIFF total score
  - School
  - Home
  - Feelings (depression, anxiety, trauma)
  - Substance use
- Youth report significant improvement:
  - Self harm potential
  - Family environment (“child welfare” concerns)
Change in JIFF Total Score:
Youth & Caregiver Reported

![Graph showing change in JIFF Total Score](image)

All t-tests are significant at p<.000 for d statistics, .20 = small effect, .50 = moderate, >.80 = large
d = .92  d = 1.03  d = .67  d = .93

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Change in JIFF School Score:
Youth & Caregiver Reported

![Graph showing change in JIFF School Score](image)

All t-tests are significant at p<.000 for d statistics, .20 = small effect, .50 = moderate, >.80 = large
d = .97  d = .96  d = .89  d = .94

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