

LOCATION: Anchorage, Alaska

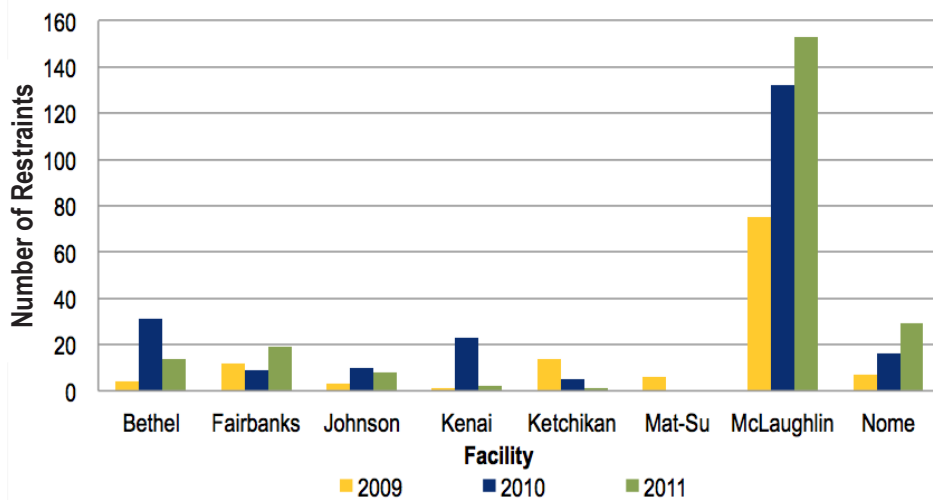
REQUESTOR: The State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

REQUEST: DJJ requested support in reducing the incidence of physical restraints on juvenile offenders through the use of a client behavior management (CBM) system, including a broad continuum of responses for youth behavior and physical management.

Priorities

- Assess DJJ's existing CBM and officer safety training systems
- Select data points to help inform decision-making regarding CBM
- Identify model approaches and promising practices for CBMs to support development of one that meets DJJ's needs

Restraints on Youth by DJJ Facilities



Overview

DJJ sought assistance in evaluating and improving its CBM and officer safety training system while taking the unique needs of the juvenile offender population in Alaska into consideration. DJJ also requested assistance in identifying promising practices for facility and community staff to use to better address the cultural and behavioral health needs of juvenile offenders related to CBM.

The Diagnostic Center, in collaboration with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's State Training and Technical Assistance Center (STTAC), conducted interviews and gathered data to assess DJJ's CBM systems and identified organizational challenges and strengths to shifting towards a single umbrella CBM system.

The Diagnostic Center and STTAC recommended DJJ transition to one umbrella CBM system. This single system would provide the overarching philosophy and strategy to CBM and link the actions, skills and techniques utilized by each unit to the one philosophy. DJJ was also advised to design a system that includes a broader set of tactics across the de-escalation continuum and focuses on divergent strategies between the organizational units.

The Diagnostic Center and STTAC delivered a series of workshops focused on refining the core elements of a CBM system based on data, promising practices and DJJ's unique environment.



Diagnostic Center Findings

- Unique characteristics of DJJ offenders including 71% male, 48% with behavioral health diagnoses and 50% minority
- Localized decision-making coupled with limited staff interaction across facilities
- Stable workforce with strong leadership
- Inconsistent approaches to behavior management
- Training of staff within a cultural context is not fully integrated into CBM system



Diagnostic Center Recommendations

- Transition from three CBMs to one umbrella system that includes a broad de-escalation continuum
- Implement a CBM program that integrates cultural competencies, trauma-informed care and child-center therapeutic programs
- Strengthen quality assurance programs to ensure CBM is implemented with fidelity
- Strengthen data collection and analysis to monitor effectiveness of CBM system
- Continue creating opportunities to further strengthen internal operations that address CBM change
- Evaluate and implement evidence-based programs that provide effective services to DJJ youth

"The Diagnostic Center's support was invaluable in our continuing efforts to strengthen DJJ's client behavior management system."

- Barbara Murray, Alaska Juvenile Justice Specialist

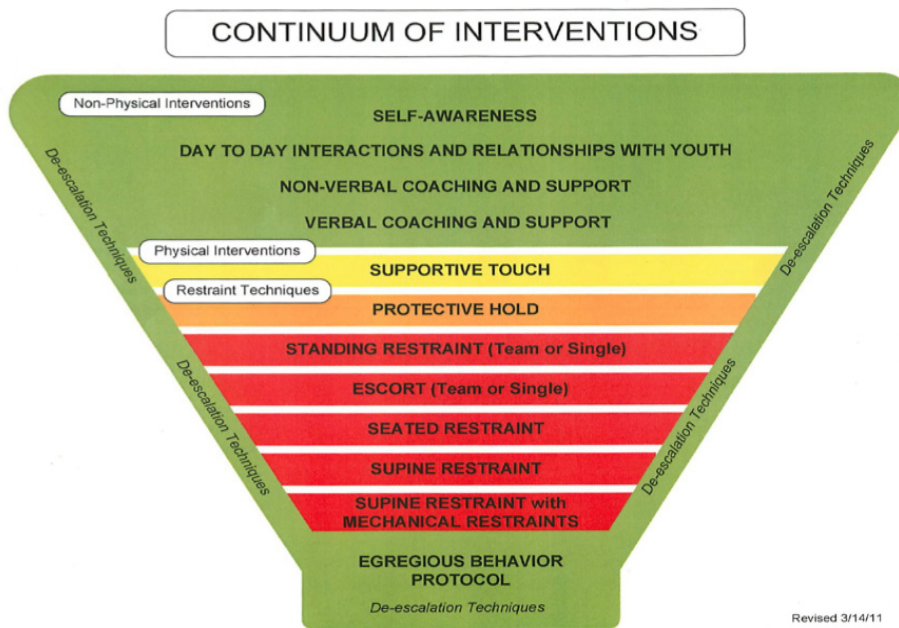


Community's Response

In November 2012, the Diagnostic Center and OJJDP's State Training and Technical Assistance Center (STTAC) delivered a two-day onsite workshop to stakeholders from across DJJ, including the executive management team and members of the officer safety working group that comprised staff from community/program and facilities. The session consisted of delivery of the Diagnostic Analysis, which presented recommendations to address opportunities for improvement. The Diagnostic Center and STTAC also delivered other workshops, including:

- Effective Components of Client Behavior Management System
- Evaluating Alternative Client Behavior Management Systems
- Prioritizing Client Behavior Management System Components
- Designing a Modified Client Behavior Management System for DJJ

Following this, the Diagnostic Center and STTAC delivered a webinar to DJJ staff, which focused on model practices associated with CBMs to include research on the adolescent brain, effective components of CBMs, continuum of interventions, trauma informed care, prohibited elements of CBMs, a case study and review of DJJ youth data.



Lessons Learned and Next Steps

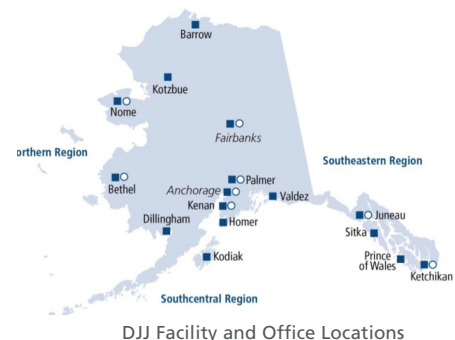
The collaboration between OJJDP, STTAC and the Diagnostic Center brought resources from the justice field to identify evidence, research and effective practices utilized by juvenile justice systems to reduce use of force incidents and broaden the de-escalation and intervention continuum leveraged within juvenile justice systems. The analysis revealed key challenges to help inform strategies, including:

- Recognizing DJJ's organizational culture and the need to shift its philosophy regarding client behavior management from physical management to a broader interpretation that includes a range of interventions along a de-escalation continuum.
- Creating an umbrella approach to client behavior management and DJJ programming that focuses on pro-social behaviors, trauma informed care and physical management.
- Leveraging data around juvenile justice youth to focus programming and behavior management techniques, including behavioral health diagnoses.
- Informing DJJ stakeholders of the research, evidence and promising practices to help inform the development of a customized model that meets the unique needs of DJJ.

As a result of DJJ's engagement with the Diagnostic Center, DJJ's leadership issued a memorandum outlining the key parameters for staff to follow as they develop a customized behavior management system based on evidence, research and promising practices.

What is the Diagnostic Center?

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs launched the Diagnostic Center in Spring 2012 to serve as a technical assistance resource for state, local and tribal policymakers seeking to implement data-driven strategies to combat crime and improve public safety in their communities. The defining characteristic of the Diagnostic Center is its approach to being smart on crime by helping state and local leaders to use local data to apply what works in criminal justice in their communities. This effort ensures that limited local resources are invested wisely, federal assets are leveraged where they are needed most and communities reap better public safety outcomes.



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