An Examination of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Structured Decision-Making (SDM) Risk Assessment Tool :

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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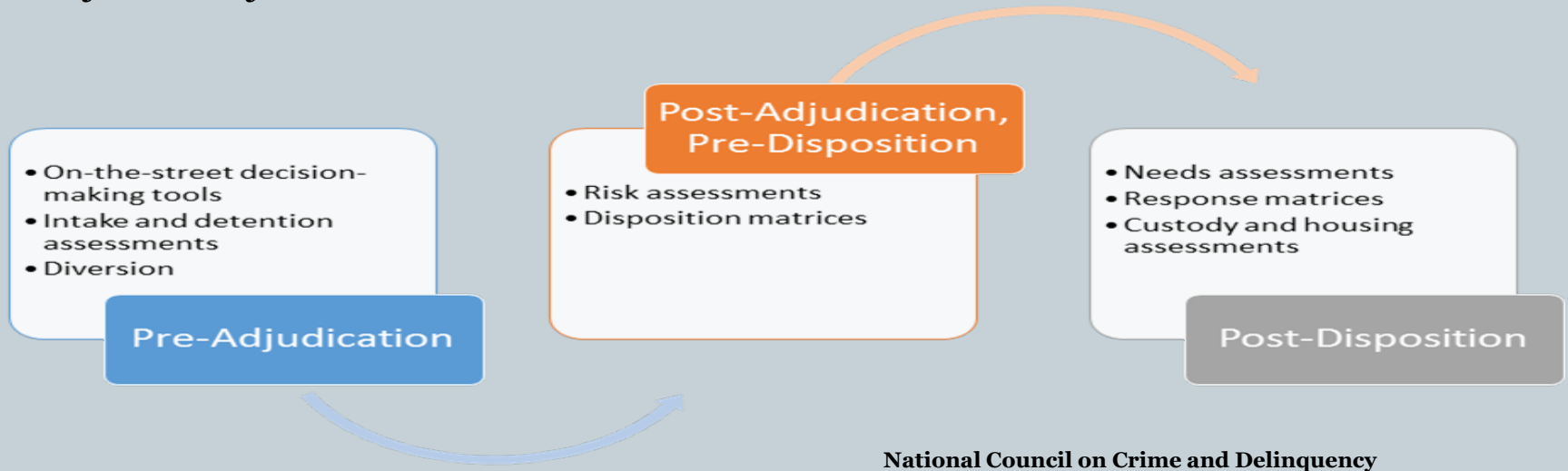
Introduction

OUTLINE (cont.)

The SDM MODEL

- The Structured Decision Making® (SDM) model for juvenile justice is an evidence- and research-based system that identifies the key points in the life of a juvenile justice case

Pre-Adjudication
- On-the-street decision-making tools
- Intake and detention assessments
- Diversion

Post-Adjudication, Pre-Disposition
- Risk assessments
- Disposition matrices

Post-Disposition
- Needs assessments
- Response matrices
- Custody and housing assessments

National Council on Crime and Delinquency

Historical Glance of SDM Risk Assessment Tool use at DYRS

- **History.** DYRS began using the SDM tool in 2009.

- **Validated Risk Assessment**. In 2013 Annie E. Casey & National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

- **Purpose.** Create rationality, transparency, and uniformity to the placement process.

- **Restrict use secure residential treatment.** Placement of youth in secure residential treatment only for serious and violent offenders.

- **Create alternative placements.** The placement of justice-involved youth with lower severity of offenses and risk levels to be placed in the community or at home.

Understanding the Utility of Current SDM Risk Assessment Tool

What Do We Need to Better Understand?

- How DYRS staff currently uses of the risk assessment tool in assisting them in making clinical and placement decisions.

- And why is there an increase use of overrides among DYRS staff during the placement review process.

Understanding the Utility of Current SDM Risk Assessment Tool

What Did We Do?

- ORE completed analysis of the use of overrides by staff.

- ORE conducted additional literature reviews regarding the benefits of the inclusion of Adverse Childhood Event (ACEs) and Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs).

- In July 2020, ORE completed a focus group among case management unit to get feedback regarding staff use of the current risk assessment tool.

Understanding the Utility of Current SDM Risk Assessment Tool

What Did We Do?

- Examined how the existing research literature on risk assessment tools use among justice-involved populations can be informative and directive in improving the current risk.

- Identified & reviewed other risk assessment tools that might be more robust in meeting the needs of the agency.

ORE Analysis of Overrides

FINDINGS

Issues with Current SDM Risk Assessment Tool

- **High Use of Overrides.** Since FY2014, new commitment placement decisions have had an increased override rate from 36% in FY2014 to 63% in FY2018.

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020
Override %	63%	49%	37%

Trends of Overrides down between FY2017- FY2020.

- In FY2018, there were **twice as many overrides down** as there were overrides up.
- In FY2019, that increased to **2.5 times the number of overrides down as up.**
- So far in FY2020, 3 **overrides are up, the rest are down.**

What is Missing from Current SDM Tool?

- **Rigidity and datedness of placement matrix.** Multiple jurisdictions using a SDM risk assessment tool (e.g., the St. Louis, MO and the state of Indiana) have adapted their matrix to be less rigid and having the ability to make multiple placement recommendations.

- **Inclusion of additional social factors.** The addition of social factors not currently included in the SDM risk assessment tool would make placement decisions a more dynamic process.

Results from the Focus Group

FINDINGS

Summary of Major Themes From Focus Group

SDM Risk Assessment Tool Limitations

- ○ *Frequency of Reassessment. Youth* progress should be monitored more frequently perhaps every 90 days.

- ○ *Lacked Inclusion of other monitoring Factors. Participants suggested that other* factors (e.g., school engagement, compliance with program activities, substance use, GPS monitoring, successful completion of group home or residential place, or placement disruptions) were relevant in the tracking of youth progress.

Major Themes From Focus Group

SDM Risk Assessment Tool Limitations

○ ***Additional Training.*** Clarity and training regarding legal terms used in the SDM risk tool.

○ ***Override Use and Safety Concerns.*** Use of Overrides are often performed to send youth to group home of facility outside community of origin due to concerns for youth safety i.e., returning to community of origin.

Summary of Major Themes From Focus Group

Reforming The Placement Review Committee Process

- **Inclusion of Youth's Voice in Placement Process.** Would enable youth to "Understand why things are happening and why choices being made".

- ***Care Coordinator discuss Placement Options Under Consideration With Youth***. This would help youth understand "options out there and base it off their strengths".

- **Strengthen The Connection Between Youth Assets & Treatment**. "Explain (to youth) how progress works...look at strengths and attach them into a placement where highlights strengths, (while) addressing challenges having in the community".

Summary of Major Themes From Focus Group

Reforming The Placement Review Committee Process

○ **Importance of Parental Inclusion in Placement Review Process.** Focus group participants express that parental voices and preferences should be heard and considered. As one participant explained this would be "consistent with the agency's guiding principles" of having parents involved.

○ *Resource Center at YSC & New Beginnings For Youth Explore & Learn About Placement Options*. There was significant discussion among participants around need for a resource library that youth could access regarding placement options.

Summary of Other Themes From Focus Group

Need for Better Recognition of Youths' Strengths

- ***Youth Strengths Discussed but Their Progress Not Always Monitored.*** Participants suggested a need for better documentation of youths' strengths. *"Success not just getting recommitted or getting a new charge not really capturing it… not only tracking negative but positive".*

- ***Documentation of Youth Voice in their Progress.*** "Youth (should) able to see how they progressed…went from not believing in myself to achieving this goal".

Summary of Other Themes From Focus Group

Need for Better Recognition of Youths' Strengths

○ *Identifying Youth Goals Through Rapport Building*. Assist youth in the identification of their goals through utilizing tools that are non-intrusive and that are age and cognitively appropriate.

○ *Documentation of Youth Achievement & Accomplishments.* Participants discussed the importance of acknowledgement of of youth success.

Scenario #1

KEEP THE CURRENT SDM RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS & ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

Proposed Modifications to Current SDM Risk Assessment Tool (Revise Placement Matrix)

○ The proposed matrix separates out of state group homes into its own category between local community group homes and secure residential placement facilities.

○ In initial testing with a proposed matrix revision, ORE found that DYRS is already placing more consistently with that matrix as it eliminates overrides to a less restrictive placement option.

The Revised Placement Matrix

		Offense Category				
		Non-weapon Municipal Violations/ Status Offenses/ Probation Violations	**Non-Person Misdemeanor**	**Person-Related Misdemeanors/Threats/ Non-Firearm Weapon-Related Municipal Violations*****	**Non-Person Felony/Firearm-Related Municipal Violations****	**Person Felony Offenses**
Risk Level	**Low**	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home	Home w/services and supervision ILP Foster Care Local Group Home Out-of- State GH
	Moderate	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home Out-of- State GH	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home Out-of-State GH New Beginnings/YSC RTC/PRTF
	High	Home w/services and supervision	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home Out-of- State GH	Home w/services and supervision ILP DYRS Foster Care Local Group Home Out-of-State GH New Beginnings/YSC RTC/PRTF

The Revised Placement Matrix (cont.)

- *GPS to be used consistent with Youth Public Safety Team policies. See Care Coordinator Handbook

- * Youth requests for Job Corps or Military Academy can override the matrix.

- **Not including BB Gun.

- ***Include BB Gun here.

- **Level 1 –** Home, CFSA Foster Care

- **Level 2 –** Local Group Home, Independent Living, DYRS Foster Care

- **Level 3 –** Out-of-State Group Home

- **Level 4 –** New Beginnings/YSC/RTC/ PRTF

Formalization of Overrides

- The override process needs to be a more formalized mechanism that is also attached to the SDM form in FAMCare.

  - **Approval Decision.** This would include information on why the override was approved, who approved it, and the placement decision.

  - **Clinical vs. Placement Decision.** Moreover it will further differentiate whether the completion of an override was for clinical reasons associated with ACEs or PACEs needs of youth versus due to a lack of options in the placement level that would be appropriate for the youth.

Addition of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

- ACE categories are emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect, witnessing domestic violence, growing up with mentally- ill or substance abusing household members, loss of a parent, or having a household member incarcerated.

  - Early exposure to ACEs increased risk experience later in life for these chronic diseases when compared to those that did not self-report experiencing any ACEs.

  - In other words, adults that reported 4 or more ACEs had an increased odd ratio (ranging from a low of 1.3 for experiencing physical inactivity to a high of 12.2 times of lifetime suicide) of experiences chronic diseases leading to death.

Addition of Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs)

PACEs consist with Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) Framework.

❑ *Learning/Doing* & *Attaching/Belonging* (psychological) through which facilitate positive developmental assets (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010).

❑ *Learning/Doing & Attaching/Belonging* perspective of asset formation that justice-involved youth can increase internal and external assets and develop the requisite skills and competences that will reduce delinquent behaviors.

Benefits of Addition of ACEs & PACEs Measures to SDM Tool

- **Alignment with DYRS's philosophy regarding Positive Youth Justice.**
  - The PYJ framework builds on justice-involved youth strengths and assets within their developmental contexts in order to facilitate positive adaptations (resilience).
  - Further understanding the impact of ACEs as a formal part of the SDM potentially help limit the possibility of further traumatizing youth as prior known trauma history would be formally considered in the placement process.

- **Better Practice & Programming.**
  - The identification of PACEs (i.e., youth developmental assets and strengths) is central to organizing youth programming because it allow for the identification of malleable assets within adolescent and adults systems.
  - The intentionality and targeting of specific clusters of developmental assets by programs can result in positive alterations of both short and long-term outcomes within the ecological systems which these youth reside.

- **Better Tracking.**
  - The addition ACEs and PACEs assessments would allow for a formal and comprehensive discussion of social factors currently discussed and considered (e.g., in placement decisions) but may not always be formally tracked.
  - This will ensure consistency and transparency in placement decisions and the treatment planning process.

Scenario #2

REPLACE CURRENT SDM RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model

- The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model developed by Andrews and Bonta (2007) provides a roadmap for utilization of screening and assessment instruments.

- Purpose. Identify and respond to the individual offender risks and needs in order to facilitate rehabilitation.

- Matching of risk reoffending with right "dosage" of treatment services.

The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model

❑ **Risk Principle.** Offender recidivism can be reduced if the level of treatment services provided to the offender is proportional to the offender's risk to re-offend.

❑ **Need Principle.** Treatment should focus on offenders' *criminogenic needs* which are dynamic risk factors (change*able attributes*) associated with delinquent behaviors such as substance abuse treatment and anti-social attitudes.

❑ Dynamic factors are the targets for services and interventions.

The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model

❑ **Responsivity Priniciple.** The promotion of change in behaviors based on utilization of tenets of social learning theory .

  ❑ Development of positive relationship with others

  ❑ Involvement in structured activities that promote positive changes through appropriate forms of modeling, reinforcement, and problem-solving behaviors that foster pro-social skill development.

• Better matching of treatment, programming, and interventions based on an individual's responsivity factors, increase chances for success (Cobb, Mowatt, & Mullins, 2013)

RNR & PYD Models on Risks & Strengths

	Risks & Needs	Strengths & Assets
RNR	Static Risk & Dynamic Risk Needs	Responsivity factors
PYD	Shift from views of children and adolescents from having "problems and deficits" to viewing them as "resources versus problems ".	Developmental Assets *Internal assets* commitment to learning positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. *External assets* support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time.

YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE/CASE MANAGEMENT INVENTORY (YLS/CMI)

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

- The YLS/CMI was adapted from the structure and components of the LSI-R.

- The YLS/CMI is designed to assess criminogenic needs and youth recidivism.

- Primarily for use in population of young offenders between the ages of 12-18.

- Assist juvenile justice practitioners with assessing the needs of youth through the inclusion of dynamic risk characteristics.

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

- The YLS/CMI produces a risk score (low, moderate, high or very high) on potential for re-offending.

- Information is gathered from a variety of sources both directly and through collateral information (e.g., schools, probation, and mental health agencies).

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

The YLS/CMI is compromised of 42 dichotomous (Yes or No) measures

Eight subscales

① Prior/Current Offenses
② Education
③ Leisure & Recreation
④ Peer Relations
⑤ Substance Abuse
⑥ Family & Parenting
⑦ Attitudes & Orientation
⑧ Personality (Schmidt et al., 2005).

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

- Each item on the YLS/ CMI is coded as either present or absent.

- Items within each of the eight categories are combined, and a level of need score (i.e., low, medium, high) is assigned for each category.

- Total risk score for recidivism (i.e., low, medium, high, or very high risk) rating is calculated based on the entire checklist.

Source (Viera, Skilling, & Peterson, 2009)

THE MODIFIED POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT CHANGE TOOL (M-PACT)

The Modified Positive Achievement Change Tool (M-PACT)

M-PACT Low Risk Screener and Full M-PACT.

- PACT uses a semi-structured protocol and motivational interviewing techniques by which staff member have a conversation with the youth to elicit required information.

- Both the full-assessment and the pre-screen protocols produce identical scores measuring a juvenile's risk of re-offending.

- Therefore whether using a pre-screen or a full-assessment, youth's overall risk to re-offend will be identical.

- Administration of the full-assessment is used to gain a better understanding of a youth social history, present circumstances of the youth, and inform the case planning process.

The Modified Positive Achievement Change Tool (M-PACT)

M-PACT Low Risk Screener

- A brief risk assessment (46 items) and typically administered at the intake stage with in-custody and out-of-custody referrals.

- Designed to screen out low risk offenders

- Items screen for criminal & social history & high risk categories (violence, property crime, drug, and overall felony risk).

- Scores are summed, youth categorized (low, moderate, moderate-high, or high)

Source: https://vant4ge.com/about-us/

The Modified Positive Achievement Change Tool (M-PACT Low Screener)

Criminal History

- Age at first offense
- Misdemeanors
- Felonies
- Weapons any
- Against person misd.
- Against person felonies
- Sexual misconduct
- Felony sex offense
- Detention Confinement
- JRA Confinement
- Escapes
- Failure to Appear Warrants

Social History

- Demographics
- School (enrollment, conduct, attendance, performance)
- Current friends
- Out of home placements
- History of runaway/kicked out
- Family ever incarcerated
- Current parental control
- Alcohol/drug use (history and current)
- Abuse (physical and sexual)
- Violence/neglect (witnessed or history)
- History of mental health (problem, intrusive anger, thoughts, & trauma
- Attitudes/Behaviors (law abiding, accepts responsibility, verbal or physical aggression solves conflict)

The Modified Positive Achievement Change Tool (M-PACT)

Full M-PACT

- A longer risk assessment (126 items) designed to be used with youth who are identified as "not low risk" on the M-PACT™ Low Risk Screener. It includes the M-PACT™ Risk Assessment Models and the M-PACT™ Needs Assessment Models.

- Designed for youth that receive a moderate-high or high score on the M-PACT Low Risk Screener

Source: https://vant4ge.com/about-us/

The Modified Positive Achievement Change Tool (M-PACT)

Full M-PACT

- Consist of Risk & Protective Factors

- The following Twelve Domains :
  - Criminal History
  - Aggression
  - Alcohol & Drugs
  - Attitudes Behaviors
  - Employment
  - Family
  - Living Arrangements
  - Mental Health
  - Relationships
  - School
  - Skills
  - Use of Free Time

Comparisons of YLS/CMI & M-PACT Risk Assessment Tools

Similarities	Differences
• Both tools are designed to identify criminogenic needs of youth (delinquency, aggression, or recidivism) that can be targeted for change • Provide guidance for case management and rehabilitation/case planning • Consist with RNR Model major risk/needs. • Moderate predictive validity for recividism	• YLS/CMI no stand alone for protective factors; primarily captures deficits in protective factors.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Inform case management decisions through accurate identification & classification of risk/needs of youth.

- Inform type and intensity of treatment interventions.

- Working document regarding to needs of youth.

- Not designed to replace or substitute professional judgment of practitioners but assist in the decision-making process.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Positive impact on Placement decisions
- First placement, best placement
- Referral to appropriate array of services
- Cost Savings
  - Unwarranted Service out of home
  - Not recommending services
  - Data gathering & reporting
  - Resource Allocation

Source: Presentation by Dr. Gina Vincent entitled YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE/CASE MANAGEMENT INVENTORY (YLS/CMI) IN PA JCJC CONFERENCE 2009

Questions?

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