Dauphin County
Children & Youth Services
FGDM Outcome Report

Review Period:
July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014
Overview of the Intervention

JusticeWorks is adept and established at working with families, teenagers and delinquent youth in coordination with Caseworkers and Juvenile Probation to help develop specific and achievable continuing care plans, and supervise the transition back to the community and family units.

We are familiar with swiftly building relationships, de-escalating potential crises and assisting to create compromises within the family structure to preserve the family, assuring safety and establishing guidelines which satisfy bottom line concerns identified by CYS and/or JPO. Our staff recognizes the urgency of FGDM conferences to be coordinated timely, ensuring outreach to all possible supports and gaining valuable input from all professionals involved within the family within 30 days.

The JusticeWorks FGDM programs were implemented at various times since 2009 in an effort to reduce the number of children placed outside the home by County Offices of Children & Youth Services and Juvenile Probation. Agencies opt to either front load treatment services to prevent placements, providing families support and education or if the family is already experiencing some type of out-of-home care episode, utilize our Aftercare programs to reduce the length of stay in all placement sources. This outcome report measures the impact of our FGDM services for 2013-2014, calculated from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

JusticeWorks YouthCare works diligently to prevent placements and assist to reunify youth via immediate and continuous contact with the family, thorough assessment across all domains of concern: community outreach, building on family strengths, and stabilization or remediation in all areas of basic living and special concerns (including employment, housing, education, drug abuse and mental health treatment). We move swiftly to secure resources to address all family needs and to prevent placement whenever viable: with an explicit attempt to circumvent formal adjudication through the court.

In 2008 we were nominated by three counties as a promising practice for their needs based budget for 2009, based on our service provision and outcome reports. In 2011 we expanded our FGDM service line to include Chester County Juvenile Probation, Dauphin County Children and Youth, Indiana County Children and Youth, Lehigh County Juvenile Probation and Children and Youth Services. In 2012 we further expanded our FGDM service line to Wayne County Juvenile Probation and Chester County Children and Youth Services. In 2013 JusticeWorks YouthCare was asked to implement the Family Group practice in Dauphin County Juvenile Probation, Jefferson, Greene, Susquehanna, Washington and Wyoming County. In 2014 we were asked to expand our FGDM service line to Aging and Adult Probation services in Dauphin County. JusticeWorks now provides FGDM services to 16 counties throughout Pennsylvania.

Since we are called upon to evaluate and assess situations where the safety of children or community is at-risk, we responsibly err on the side of child safety. We will not hesitate to recommend placement when that is the most ethical and responsible option.

JusticeWorks measures the quality of its services, parallel to state requirements, through routine supervision and comprehensive case reviews. We document program outcomes utilizing our internal tracking system and obtaining data from CYS & JPO, adhering to best practice services to evaluate program effectiveness.
Goals and Outcomes

1. Swiftly coordinate FGDM upon referral. We set up and conduct the FGDM meeting within 30 days of referral if able.
2. On an emergency basis, and by request by CYS or JPO, a Rapid Safety Conference Team approach can be utilized. A FGDM conference would be held within 3-5 days to resolve an immediate crisis.
3. Provide quality staff to implement and conduct the meetings (facilitators, individual support person, and security).
4. Assist the County and family to reach an appropriate and healthy decision, within guidelines established by the CYS Caseworker or JPO Office. Improvements in the health of parents as individuals (i.e. able to make healthy choices, and decisions for themselves and children, able to cope with stress and crisis, etc.
5. Track FGDM outcomes including: time to meeting: whether meeting ended with a positive plan: follow up at or before 60 days to see if the plan was followed.
6. Improve the family’s ability to reunify and or prevent recidivism.
7. Improve continuing care planning, coordination and implementation with community resources.
8. Coordinate post-meeting follow up to ensure family plan follow through.

Program Impact

The below numbers are based off of all services discharged between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

In FY: 2013-2014, the average length of service for a family involved in this practice was 80 days, or, roughly, 11.4 weeks.

• JusticeWorks YouthCare received a total of 21 referrals. There were a total of 40 children/youth that were affected through the FGDM referral (counting identified child and siblings under the age of 18).
  o 8 referrals resulted in a successful conference
  o 4 referrals resulted in a successful referral
  o 9 referrals resulted in an unsuccessful referral

• 38% success rate in completion of FGDM conference,
• 19% successful in applying a new family engagement/activity through FGDM.
  o 3 Family Team Meetings were held.
• 43% unsuccessful referrals.
  o 7 families refused the FGDM process.

Unsuccessful Referral: An unsuccessful referral is defined as the referral of a family to FGDM that does not result in a FGDM conference or any new engagement activities due to lack of engagement of nuclear and extended kin.

Successful Referral: A successful referral is defined as new family engagement actions/activities occurring after a referral to FGDM that directly correlate to the FGDM referral, but that do not lead to a successful FGDM conference. The new engagement/activities must be documented in the Family Service Plan.
Successful Conference: A successful conference is defined as a conference that is held with a facilitator, nuclear family, and extended kin.

The total number of days that it took to coordinate a successful conference is broken down as follows:

- 1 conference, or roughly 13%, was coordinated in 10 days or less.
- 4 conferences, or roughly 50%, were coordinated in 30 days or less.
- 3 conferences, or roughly 37%, were coordinated in 31-60 days.
- 0 conferences, or roughly 0%, were coordinated in 61 days or more.
  - 61 days or more of coordination time could be due to weather, vacations of professional participants or family members, sensitivity to domestic violence and sexual abuse cases, PFA orders or a safety plan in place.

The average number of days that were spent on coordinating a successful conference was 29.75 days.

The average number of hours that were spent on coordinating a successful conference was 18.4 hours.
  - Please note this number is calculated based on the average numbers JW spent coordinating the conference – this does not count follow up/post conference meetings.

8 conferences, 100%, were held at a location other than the family’s home or the county building.
- 2 conferences were held at a local church
- 1 conference was held at the JWYC office
- 3 conferences were held at a community center or building
- 2 conferences were held at the local public library
- 0 conferences were held at a site listed as other

The number of successful conferences where the plan satisfied the bottom lines was 8 conferences, or roughly, 100%.

The number of plans that were accepted and signed off on by the JPO/CW was 8 conferences, or 100%.
10 successful conferences, or roughly 125% had a pre-conference prior to the conference. The percentage of more than 100% took into account the pre-conferences were held with the intention to hold a FGDM conference, however then the FGDM conference did not take place.

7 successful conferences, or 880%, had a follow up/post conference meeting scheduled.
  • Of those 7 follow up meetings scheduled, 6 or roughly 86%, the family had a follow up meeting.

### Referral Source(s)

During FY: 2013-2014 JusticeWorks received a total of 21 referrals for Family Group Conferencing. The table below provides further clarification surrounding the sources of those referrals.

#### CYS Referral Source

- 2 referrals (roughly 10%) were referred by the Permanency A department;
- 6 referrals (29%) were referred by the Protective A department;
- 1 referral (roughly 5%) was referred by the Protective B department;
- 12 referrals (roughly 57%) were listed as other or unit unknown.

#### Types of Referral(s)

JusticeWorks YouthCare offers services to families involved with either the juvenile justice or child welfare system(s). The types of referrals that the program receives represent the wide-range of needs identified within each family/youth involved.
The figure above represents juvenile justice cases that were closed between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014: and outlines the reasons for which they were referred. As visually represented above:

- Roughly 0 cases, or 0%, were referred for reasons related to GPS.
- Roughly 2 cases, or 10%, were referred for reasons related to reunification.
- Roughly 10 cases, or 48%, were referred for reasons related to preservation.
- Roughly 1 case, or 5%, was referred for reasons related to aging out of care.
- Roughly 1 case, or 5%, was referred for reasons related to truancy.
- Roughly 4 cases, or 19%, were referred for reasons related to custody issues.
- Roughly 3 cases, or 14%, were referred for reasons listed as other. Some reasons for other may be permanency, identifying supports, or maintaining placement.

The graph below takes the above data and analyzes secondary, or tertiary, factors that necessitated the involvement of JusticeWorks YouthCare. These are factors that support the initial case “type” and help to establish the depth of families’ struggles, the list for identifying these additional needs is a multi-select type. Given this, each case has the potential to meet the definitions for multiple secondary reasons. However, each case does not need or may not have a secondary reason listed as well. These are only factors that were identified at the time of referral.

- Roughly 1 case, or 25%, identified needs related to reunification as a factor for involvement.
- Roughly 2 cases, or 50%, identified needs related to preservation as a factor for involvement.
- Roughly 0 cases, or 0%, identified needs related to aging out of care as a factor for involvement.
- Roughly 0 cases, or 0%, identified needs related to truancy as a factor for involvement.
• Roughly 0 cases, or 0%, identified needs related to custody issues act as a factor for involvement.
• Roughly 1 case, or 25%, identified needs related to other concerns as a factor for involvement.

Demographic Information

JusticeWorks is committed to maintaining a staff component which is diverse, culturally component and reflects the families we work with. We have bilingual Spanish staff available to help translate for families. We have arranged for other translation services as needed.

• 0 referrals, or roughly 0%, required a bilingual coordinator/facilitator at the conference.
• 0 referrals required additional language services/translator at the conference

Our training programs ensure that all staff are cognizant and respectful of the ethnic, racial and religious diversity of the families entrusted to our care. We understand and are sensitive to mixed culture relationships, step parent issues, adoption, non-traditional families (including gay and lesbian) and other issues which reflect the nationality or religious heritage of the families with whom we work.

Out of all referrals received during the period under review, participants and their gender were identified to the following:

• 3 males or 14%
• 18 females or 86%

Out of all referrals received during the period under review, participants and their gender were identified to the following:

• 11 Caucasian individuals or roughly 52%
• 9 African American individuals or roughly 43%
• 0 Bi-Racial individual or roughly 0%
• 0 Multi-Racial individual or roughly 0%
• 0 Hispanic individuals or roughly 0%
• 1 Unknown race or roughly 5%
Out of all referrals received during the period under review, the age of the identified individual was reported as:

- 2 individuals, or roughly 10%, were 0-5 years of age;
- 0 individuals, or roughly 0%, were 6-12 years of age;
- 4 individuals, or roughly 19%, were 13-17 years of age;
- 2 individuals, or roughly 10%, were 18-21 years of age.
- 13 individuals, or roughly 62%, were 21 years and older of age.

21 families were referred and resided in or near Dauphin County. Of those:

- 12 families resided in Harrisburg;
- 1 family resided Halifax;
- 3 families resided in Middletown;
- 1 family resided in Steelton;
- 2 families resided in Hummelstown;
- 1 family resided in Lebanon; and,
- 1 family resided in Chambersburg;

Out of all referrals, 7 families, or roughly 33%, were previously involved in the FGDM process.

- All 7 of those families (100%) were involved with FGDM through Child Welfare.

All of our FGDM Coordinators are trained and certified in Strategies to Empower Families Experiencing Domestic Violence from the Child Welfare Resource Center through the University of Pittsburgh. Our coordinators express the laws and regulations that guide Child Welfare practice when domestic violence is
present throughout the casework process. They recognize the prevalence of domestic violence (DV) in families referred to the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) process. Our coordinators are able to identify the impact that a batterer’s mindset has on the specific tasks of a coordinator and facilitator of a FGDM conference, as well as specify what questions should be asked to explore the presence of DV within the family dynamic. Lastly, our coordinators determine what safety interventions need to be in place, before, during and after the conference.

• 0 referrals were identified as domestic violence cases.

Referrals are received mainly through the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, however it is important to note other county systems that may be involved with the families.

• 6 families had county systems involved, other than the juvenile justice system. Families may have multiple county systems involved.
  o 2 families were also involved with JPO
  o 5 families were also involved with MH
  o 3 families were also involved with D&A
  o 1 family was involved in a county system listed as other: Adult Probation

Family Engagement Strategies

JusticeWorks utilizes family engagement and involvement as one its strengths-based perspectives to assist families in achieving the best possible outcomes. These key elements include but are not limited to, listening to each family member, demonstrating respect and empathy for family members, developing an understanding of the family’s past experiences, current situation, concerns and strengths, responding to concrete needs quickly, establishing the purpose of involvement with the family, being aware of one’s own biases and prejudices, validating the participatory role of the family and being consistent, reliable and honest.

Our staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect and clearly articulated goals. Staff are trained to enhance families’ capacity to support the growth and development of all family members. Our FGDM service affirms and strengthens families’ cultural, racial and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to community-building process. Staff advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive and accountable.

JusticeWorks believes that in order for FGDM to be successful both maternal and paternal sides of the family need to be invited and attend to create a plan. Of the 8 referrals that had a successful conference outcome:

• 8 conferences, or roughly 100%, the mother of the identified individual was invited to the conference.
  o Of those 8 invited mothers, 8 or roughly 100% attended the conference.
• 7 conferences, or roughly 88%, the father of the identified individual was invited to the conference.
  o Of those 7 invited fathers, 6 or roughly 86% attended the conference.
• 3 conferences, or roughly 38%, the paternal side of the family was invited to the conference.
  o Of those 3 invited paternal relatives, 3 or roughly 100% attended the conference.
• 6 conferences, or roughly 75%, the maternal side of the family was invited to the conference.
  o Of those 6 invited maternal relatives, 5 or roughly 83% attended the conference.
• 1 conference, or roughly 13%, more than one father was involved and invited to the conference.
  o Of those 1 invited fathers, 1 or roughly 100% attended the conference.
**Family Group Decision Making**  
Dauphin County CYS FY’ 13-14

Out-of-Home Placements

While JusticeWorks’s primary goal is to effectively deliver services to families/youth in the community using theoretically sound intervention strategies for improving relational, behavioral, and/or social issues, we will err on the side of caution if we perceive potentially unsafe conditions.

Situations of (actual or potential) child abuse, criminality in the home, and/or unsafe living conditions will prompt us to effectuate removal of the children (while making plans, whenever possible, to remedy the problems and return the children home).

The information below describes those juveniles or families whose case(s) with JusticeWorks were closed between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014; and, who experienced some type of out-of-home care episode.

The graph below represents cases in which an out-of-home care episode began prior to JusticeWorks YouthCare’s involvement with the family. JusticeWorks staff provided supervised visitation or community-based support to help expedite reunification, and achieve permanency for children in the custody of Dauphin County.

Of the total cases closed during this review period (21 cases), 6 families had youth already residing in an out-of-home care setting.

- 3 youth were in an out-of-home care setting in a foster care setting
- 1 youth was in an out-of-home care informal-kinship care setting
- 1 youth was in an out-of-home care detention center setting
- 1 youth was in an out-of-homecare setting listed as other: possible group home or IL home.
Of these,

- 4 cases (67%), a decision to reunify was not reached during JusticeWorks involvement.
- 2 cases (33%), were reunified with an appropriate caretaker during JusticeWorks involvement.

The following graph shows the overall cases that resulted in an out-of-home care episode, versus those that did not result in an out-of-home care episode during the course of JusticeWorks’s involvement and clarifies the type of placements associated with each of these.

JusticeWorks YouthCare identifies out-of-home care episodes which occur during the course of service delivery, across three distinct categories. Those categories are: “Informal Out-of-Home Care: No Funding,” “Formal Out-of-Home Care: County Funded,” and “Formal Out-of-Home Care: MA Funded.”

“Informal Out-of-Home Care: No Funding” represents situations where children are moved temporarily from their primary residence, and perhaps out of the care of their primary, adoptive, and/or biological parent, and into an alternate setting. Usually this happens in families where there is concern regarding the extent to which the primary caretaker(s) is/are able to meet the basic, and secondary, needs of the child(ren). Families are usually the decision makers with regard to these informally arranged situations; and, custody of the child(ren) is not transferred to York County.

- 0 cases, or 0%, entered into some type of informal out-of-home care CYS arrangement during JusticeWorks YouthCare’s involvement with the family.

“Formal Out-of-Home Care: County Funded” represents situations where children have been removed from the care of their primary caretakers, through a finding of dependency. With custody formally transferred to Dauphin County, these children are placed into some type of foster care, kinship care, shelter, detention, secured residential, or group home setting.
• 1 case, or 5%, entered into some type of Dauphin County, child welfare funded, out-of-home care arrangement during JusticeWorks YouthCare’s involvement with the family.

“Formal Out-of-Home Care: MA Funded” represents situations where children have been removed from the care of their primary caretakers, due to some extreme behavioral or emotional distress. These placement types represent those paid for by the child(ren)’s insurance (private or Medicaid). Examples include rehab, long-term substance abuse inpatient counseling, inpatient mental-health treatment, or residential treatment facilities.

• 0 cases, or 0%, entered into some type of insurance-funded, out-of-home care arrangement during JusticeWorks YouthCare’s involvement with the family.

SHORT-TERM VERSUS LONG-TERM OUT-OF-HOME CARE EPISODES

JusticeWorks understands that out-of-home care episodes, on a short-term basis, can sometimes create conditions which motivate families/youth in the pre-contemplation stage of change to make necessary behavioral changes. Additionally, they can, at times, give primary caretakers or clients the time necessary to make changes to living situations and/or lifestyles to successfully mitigate the concerns identified by the child welfare, or juvenile justice, professional(s) with whom they work.

Therefore, JusticeWorks identifies short-term, out-of-home care episodes as (potentially) a necessary element of a successful resolution of the case.

For this reason, the graph below shows a breakdown of Dauphin County funded out-of-home care episodes which occurred during JusticeWorks involvement, and identifies which of these episodes resulted in child(ren) returning home before JusticeWorks discharged the family (short-term out-of-home care episode); and, those which resulted in the child(ren) remaining in an out-of-home care episode after JusticeWorks discharged the family (long-term out-of-home care episode).

 justiceWorks YouthCare successfully prevented long-term, county-funded, out-of-home care episodes, in:

• 95%, or 20 cases referred by Dauphin County Children and Youth Services.
Conclusion

JusticeWorks continues to maintain superior outcomes by redeveloping the approaches of traditional service delivery within the child welfare, and juvenile justice, system. Our innovative approaches, dedicated team of specialists, and well-defined interventions assist us with successfully establishing rapport with families, ultimately elevating the program’s ability to engage these families in the planned change process. Because of this over the course of this reporting period, JusticeWorks YouthCare has:

- Coordinated successful conferences in 60 days or less 100% of the time, averaging 29 days.
- Successfully held conferences where CYS has signed off on the plan in 100% of the cases.
- Successfully avoided county-funded and long-term, out-of-home care episodes in 95% of child welfare cases.
- Successfully reunified 33% of youth in placement prior to referral back into the community through the FGDM plan.

JusticeWorks continues to offer a full repertoire of evidence-based practices. Specifically:

- Nurturing Parenting Programs;
- Thinking for a Change (T4C) (Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention);
- WhyTry (Truancy Remediation);
- Anger Management (Certified through the National Anger Management Association); and,
- Girls’ Empowerment Movement (GEM) (Trauma-Informed Care).

Many thanks to our stakeholders and Community Resource Constituents for the collaboration and partnerships to work together to keep children, youth and families safe and healthy.