Building Local Solutions to Systemic Issues: How two distinct programs—one urban, one rural—use restorative justice to increase cost-effective opportunities for youth engagement.

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Don’t Fall Down in the Hood
Zehr’s Restorative Justice Threes

3 Restorative Justice Principles

RESTORATION: acknowledges and repairs the harm caused by, and revealed by, wrongdoing;

ACCOUNTABILITY: encourages appropriate responsibility for addressing needs and repairing the harm;

ENGAGEMENT: involves those impacted, including the community, in the resolution.

3 Restorative Justice Questions

- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- Who has the obligation to address the needs, to put right the harms, to restore relationships?

3 Stakeholder Groups

- Those who have been harmed, and their families
- Those who have caused harm, and their families
- Community

Small Group Discussions

A. Discuss any differences in perspectives around how we have described Restorative Justice.

B. How might these principles be effective in addressing systemic issues?
Vermont Court Diversion

In the ‘70’s local community justice programs began to divert minor offenders out of the court system.

Legislation made Court Diversion a statewide option for youth in 1981 & for adults in 1982 (3 VSA §163 & §164).

Vermont’s 14 county-based Court Diversion Programs form Vermont Association of Court Diversion Programs (VACDP).

VACDP receives partial funding from the state.
The mission of Vermont court diversion programs is to engage community members in responding to the needs of crime victims, the community, and those who violated the law, holding the latter accountable in a manner that promotes responsible behavior.
Vermont Court Diversion Model

- Restorative Justice: focused on righting wrongs that have been done by addressing the needs of all stakeholders, including the victim, the community, and the offender.
- Participants have been charged with a criminal offense but not adjudicated.
- County State's Attorney refers individuals to the programs.
- Participation is voluntary.
Vermont Court Diversion Model

- Participants accept responsibility for violating the law
- Volunteer community members develop contracts with participants to address the harm and underlying needs.
- Victims have the opportunity to voice their opinion.
- If successful, no criminal record and court records are sealed.
Court Diversion Outcomes

- Successful Completion Rate: 85%
- Restitution Paid (2010): $105,947
- Restitution Paid (since inception): $3,119,150
- Community Service hours completed (2010): 25,250
- Community Service hours completed (inception): 719,834
- Cost: $200/youth of State General Fund $ (Approximate)
Systemic Issue
Youth as Adults in VT


Vermont allows prosecutors to file any criminal offense committed by a youth at least 16 years old in the adult criminal court.

If not diverted, many 16 and 17 year olds charged, receive a fine and the long-term impact of a criminal conviction.
Diversion Enhancement Assessment Plan (DEAP)

Vermont Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (VT’s SAG) awarded VACDP a 3 year grant to:

- Increase resilience and decrease recidivism among youth diverted
- Increase the number of youth diverted
- Increase successful completions of Court Diversion contracts
- Encourage eligible youth to go through Family Division rather than Criminal Division
Overview of DEAP Methods

- Training to Inform Practice with Research
  - Effective Intervention Principles (Risk-Need-Responsivity)
  - Restorative Justice

- Implemented use of a validated risk assessment tool

- Oversight and evaluation informs implementation of changes

- Bi-annual Youth Justice stakeholder meetings
Bi-annual Youth Justice stakeholder meetings

- Identify harms and needs
- Identify stakeholders: who else should be at the table?
- Develop collaborative local resolutions
DON’T FALL DOWN IN THE HOOD
BUILDING LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO SYSTEMIC ISSUES:

How Two Distinct Programs – One Urban, One Rural - Use Restorative Justice to Increase Cost-effective Opportunities for Youth Engagement
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood

- An intensive, multi-cultural community based treatment program designed to reduce juvenile crime primarily in the areas of possession and use of firearms including assault, theft, and narcotics among Philadelphia’s urban youth.

- Background Data

- Environment Context
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Enrollment

- Arrest/Detention/Court Hearing
- Probation/Diversion Options
- Program Intake
  - Four to six month average length of stay (approximate thirty hours per week)
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Components

- **Phase One – Self Stabilization**
  - Comprehensive Review/Intervention of Youth Home Involvement
    - **Case Management** - Referrals to additional services as warranted; Nightly curfew checks; and Monthly parent meetings
    - **Program** - Job Readiness; Computer Literacy; Educational Enrichment; Life Skills; and Conflict Resolution
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Components

- **Phase Two – Self Development**
  - **Comprehensive Review/Intervention of Youth Court Involvement**
    
    A. **Case Management** - Referrals to additional services as warranted, representation and support with probation officers/court hearing, nightly curfew checks, and monthly parent meetings

    B. **Program** - Job Training, Computer Literacy, Educational Enrichment, Life Skills, and Conflict Resolution (continued)
Phase Three – Ongoing Sustainability

- Comprehensive Review/Intervention of Youth Community Involvement
  
  A. Case Management – Linkages with support services as warranted, completion of sixty hours of Community Service, nightly curfew checks, and monthly parent meeting
  
  B. Program – Completion of requirements; Job Placement; Preparation /Delivery of Exit Project
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Psycho-Educational Field Trips

- Empowerment Activities
- United States/Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office Presentations
- Temple University – Cradle To The Grave (Trauma Information)
- Einstein Hospital – Moss Rehabilitation Center
- Philadelphia Medical Examiner’s Office
- Baker’s Funeral Home
- Mount Peace Cemetery
- Among others
Program Examples

- Excerpts from Program DVD
  - Home Involvement
Program Examples

- Excerpts from Program DVD
  - Community Involvement
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Collaborative Partners

- Philadelphia Department of Human Services
- Philadelphia Family Court
- Public Defender Association, Juvenile Unit
- Police District Youth Aid Panels
- Pennsylvania Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)
- Youth/Law Enforcement Corporation
- Temple University: Office of Community Relations
- Community Stake Holder Groups
- Among others
Don’t Fall Down In The Hood: Resources

- **Contact Info**
  - Website: www.idaay.org
  - Office: 215-235-9110

- **Empowerment Book**
  - On Display at Conference
  - Available for Purchase July 1st on Our Website

- **Documentary DVD**
  - Available for Purchase at Conference
  - Available Now for Purchase on Our Website
Questions:

- In what ways are local collaborative efforts addressing systemic issues in the communities you are from?
- What systemic issues are not being addressed?