Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Technical Assistance Center

SERVING JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

By Matthew Saleh, J.D., Ph.D. and LaWanda Cook, Ph.D., C.R.C.
Cornell University, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITION FOCUS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Disability is an important intersectional identity in juvenile justice trends. It is estimated that somewhere between 30% and 60% of youth placed in a juvenile detention facility have a disability—most often learning or emotional disabilities (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2017). Youth with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and mental health disabilities are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system or multiple systems (e.g., child welfare or mental health) (Underwood & Washington, 2016; Slayter, 2016), and are at higher risk of committing second and third offenses once involved in the justice system (Zhang et al., 2011).

Furthermore, intersecting identities can increase the risk of justice involvement, particularly when disability overlaps with other identities associated with higher rates of discipline or justice involvement, such as race and lower socioeconomic status (McCauley, 2017; Buckingham, 2013). This points to the importance of practitioners being aware of personal and systemic barriers that may influence youths' experiences and outcomes related to key transition points.

"Justice involvement" for youth has a broader meaning than in adult contexts because it does not always entail involvement with the adult criminal court system, or involuntary detainment outside the community (Ennis, & Gonsoulin, 2015). Juvenile justice facilities might include a range of placements, including detention centers but also shared residences, shelters, staff-secure placements like youth camps, and other settings. In this brief, "justice involvement" is inclusive of: youth who have been arrested or adjudicated, including those in facility or residential placements; youth with open cases in adult court or the juvenile justice arm (including family court and/or child and family services); and, youth involved in pre-adjudicated services, alternatives to detention, diversion services, community-based placements, court oversight (e.g., court order or probation supervision), or past justice involvement of this nature (Saleh, Miller, Cook, & Uribe, 2020). Similarly, "transition services" for youth exiting justice involvement may be more broadly defined than in other contexts (e.g., school-to-work transition) to include efforts to re-engage youth with their former setting (school, home, and community), while also preparing them for future education, employment, independent living, and reducing the risk of recidivism through appropriate resources, services, and supports.

Youth with disabilities often require more intense and individualized services during and after justice involvement (Griller Clark et al., 2016), and overall have poor post-release education and employment outcomes (Griller Clark, & Unruh, 2010). Many youth experience challenges in obtaining resources and navigating multiple systems, necessitating additional transition support as they pursue life outcomes (Griller Clark et al., 2016). One barrier to providing services across systems is that many re-entry and transition services exist within silos. Justice, child welfare, mental health, and vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, for instance, often have divergent goals (e.g., surveillance or prevention vs. service and support outcomes) (Anthony et al., 2010).

In addition, breakdowns in trust between community partners and corrections/parole sectors can result from conflicts between the monitoring and case management goals of parole and juvenile justice personnel with the large caseloads and the programmatic goals of community service providers (Anthony et al., 2010). Coordination between systems is essential, since youth exiting one or more systems are most likely to experience service gaps due to issues like aging out of particular systems or services (Geenen & Powers, 2007), homelessness (Fowler, Toro, & Wallace, 2009), school dropout (Kirk & Sampson, 2013), and systems avoidance (Hook & Courtney, 2011).

LOCATING AND REACHING OUT TO YOUTH INVOLVED IN MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

Locating and reaching out to justice-involved youth with disabilities served by multiple systems is a known challenge. Success in this area requires strong collaborations between state and local government agencies, and the community partners and stakeholders who support youth upon release (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014). Many young people involved in juvenile justice are considered transition-age youth (16-24 years old) in the education system, and will engage with multiple service systems during justice involvement and re-entry (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). As one example of multiple-systems involvement, estimates indicate that up to 65% of justice-involved youth have past or current involvement in the child welfare system (Baglivio et al., 2016). Despite the prevalence of multiple systems involvement and the need for coordination of care, the presence of strong cross-systems communication and coordination mechanisms are not as common as needed (Baglivio et al., 2016).

While juvenile justice agencies generally have partnerships with community-based organizations that provide a variety of services—such as mentoring, family engagement, substance abuse counseling, and mental health services—there is a need for juvenile justice and other state-level agencies to develop and provide effective resources and referrals to facilitate ongoing partnerships (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014). At the state level, inter-agency collaborations to break down these silos are facilitated via higher-level policy integration (e.g., those created by statute), or more practice-oriented inter-agency memoranda of understanding/agreement (e.g., between VR agencies and justice or child welfare agencies). However, it is important for these agreements—whether reflected through large multi-agency collaborative work groups or within targeted, inter-agency memoranda—to be manifested in a way to be inclusive of justice-involved youth. This manifestation is achieved by taking sustainable steps aimed at addressing recommendations, action items, and scope(s) of practice for reaching justice-involved youth, and weaving them into each participating agency's internal structure and culture. Research on inter-agency

collaboration regarding transition points to the importance of: (a) joint objectives and clearly defined roles; (b) extensive sharing of resources and information; (c) frequent communication; and (d) formalized agreements (Saleh, Shaw, Malzer, & Podolec, 2019).

To this end, the federal Rehabilitation Act (Pub.L. 93-122, 1973), as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Pub.L. 113–128, 2014), encourages state agencies, in their state plans, to specify the size of different VR-eligible subpopulations for the purposes of outreach and engagement of these subpopulations. Under WIOA, locating and reaching out to youth is an important objective for VR staff. Unclassified, disengaged, or out-of-school youth can be difficult to connect with, and VR agencies may not always have clear policies or procedures to guide outreach or engagement with these populations, especially when making connections with youth involved with other agencies/systems with which VR has historically had limited connections (e.g., juvenile justice and foster care). As collaborations are enhanced between these agencies, it is critical to address gaps to assist in the outreach process.

ALIGNING WITH FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Overall, there are a variety of legislative and legal factors to consider when overlaying these constructs with the needs of justice-involved youth with disabilities. For example, one purpose of the Rehabilitation Act (1973, Sec. 2), as amended in Title IV of WIOA, is to "initiate and expand services to groups that have been underserved in the past" (The Rehabilitation Act, Sec. 2, 1973). Research highlights the existence of disability sensitivity and training gaps among juvenile justice staff (Crosby et al., 2017). Alternatively, many public system

VR counselors come to their positions with "generalist training" that can be applied in various settings, but can result in training and cultural competency gaps when serving people with multiple stigmatized identities or living in disadvantaged communities (Tansey, 2008). Additionally, there is little research about evidenced-based interventions for individuals with disabilities from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and lower income communities (Tansey, Dutta, Kundu, & Chan, 2016). Consequently, cultural competency training that furthers efforts to outreach to, engage, and serve youth with disabilities who are involved in the justice system or multiple systems—and with other identities that are underrepresented or underserved in VR outcomes—is an emerging need in satisfying the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, the high incidence of traumatic events among children involved in multiple service systems further highlights the importance of integrating trauma-informed perspectives in service delivery (Ko et al., 2008; Baglivio et al., 2016).

As noted above, many justice-involved youth drop out of school, or simply do not reengage with their educational systems after reentering the community (Hagner et al., 2008; Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). Out-of-school youth, who represent another underserved population within the VR system, are "particularly hard to engage because of their mobility and lack of connections to the service system" (Honeycutt, Bardos, & McLeod, 2014, pp. 12). For instance, a recent Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)-911 analysis of VR outcomes for all transition-age youth with disabilities who applied and were determined eligible for VR services, between 2004-2007, found that high school dropouts had the lowest odds of receiving VR services and exiting with employment (Honeycutt, Martin, & Wittenburg, 2017). Another RSA-
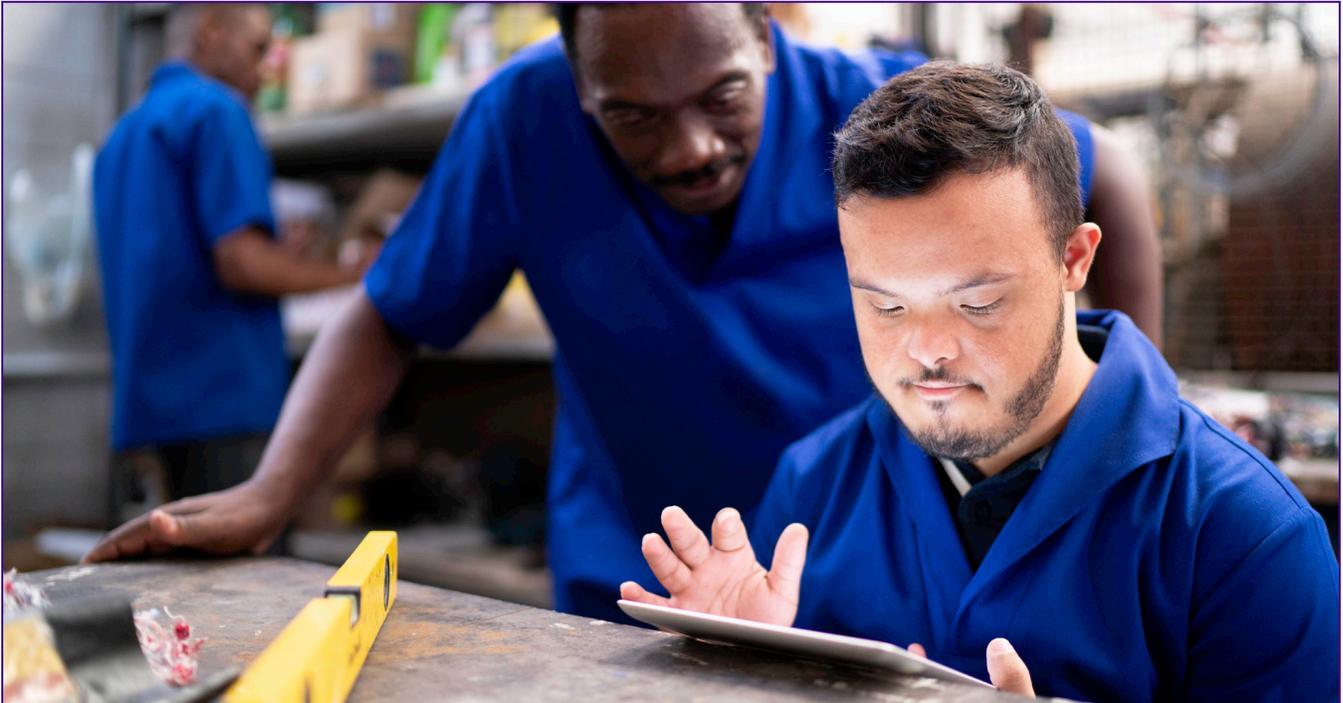
Opportunities for work are an important part of community reentry.

911 analysis indicated race/ethnicity, gender, age, and the provision of job placement assistance were among the predictors of successful VR outcomes for service recipients with mental impairments and a history of justice involvement. This finding points to the importance of culturally-competent outreach and engagement of youth with multiple barriers to employment (Gines, 2013).

State VR programs have made notable strides in assisting people with disabilities to obtain and retain employment. However, the outreach, identification, and service delivery to systems-involved populations remain potential areas for even greater impact. When leaving justice settings, quick re-engagement of youth with positive community adjustment indicators (e.g., family, housing, mental health needs) contributes to lower recidivism rates and better life outcomes (Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).

WIOA (2014, Title I) presents an opportunity for prioritizing the provision of transition services to systems-involved youth due to its renewed emphasis on identifying and serving out-of-school youth with disabilities (ages 16-24), as well as youth involved in the foster care system and/or the justice system. The goals of WIOA include promoting collaborations between VR and Title I youth programming and encouraging local workforce development boards to identify and serve systems-involved out-of-school youth in a culturally competent manner. WIOA Title I and the Rehabilitation Act both focus on initiating and expanding services to previously underserved groups (20 C.F.R. §§ 681.210, 681.410).

WIOA Title I services focus on preparation for postsecondary education and employment, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and acquisition of employment with career/promotional opportunities. Eligibility for services depends on the youth's age, whether they are attending school, and whether they experience one or more of the defined barriers to employment. Having a

disability is one of WIOA's defined barriers to employment, as are involvement in the juvenile or adult justice system, and participation in or aging out of the foster care system (WIOA, 2014, Sec. 3, def. 24-25). WIOA requires that a minimum of 75% of WIOA Youth Title I program funds be spent on out-of-school youth while ensuring that the full range of services is available, regardless of disability or cultural background (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This includes addressing challenges in coordinating workforce development with VR, juvenile justice, foster care, and mental health systems.

Of the estimated three million youth and young adults who are out-of-school, many have barriers and/or functional limitations because of a disability that may qualify them for VR services (Youth Technical Assistance Center [Y-TAC], n.d.). Some state VR agencies already engage in targeted outreach for youth involved in the foster care or justice systems as specific subpopulations and are working collaboratively within different types of juvenile justice settings to provide employment and related transition services (Y-TAC, n.d.). Nevertheless, more clarity is needed on best practices to connect youth to employment and the provision of services to youth placed within a variety of juvenile justice settings.

Finally, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) requires that youth with disabilities involved in juvenile justice are afforded access to the equivalent services and treatment as youth without disabilities, and that child welfare agencies not deprive them of family or community-based placement, independent living services, permanency planning, or other services available to youth without disabilities. In addition, VR counselors, case workers, service providers, and justice settings need to make reasonable modifications to allow full access

to services and programming. Further, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA, Part B, 1997, 2004) mandate to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities applies to states, state educational agencies, and public agencies (including local educational agencies and responsible non-educational public agencies).

Another federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) (ESSA) (Pub.L. 114–95), outlines specific requirements for school districts and juvenile justice settings in coordinating youth re-entry. Except where there is a specific exception, all IDEA protections apply to students with disabilities in justice settings, and merely being charged or convicted of a crime does not diminish the youth's IDEA substantive rights or procedural safeguards.

EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH

Youth with disabilities experience poorer long-term educational outcomes following justice involvement. A single-state study found that only 44% of school-age youth with disabilities returned to school after being released from placement in a juvenile justice setting, and rates of high school diploma attainment were much lower for students with emotional/behavioral and learning disabilities (Cavendish, 2013). Many youth with disabilities who enter the justice system (37%) do so without having received the special education services they needed while in school, and educational deficits often grow while involved with the justice system (National Council on Disability, 2015). Conversely, the attainment of educational opportunities and outcomes during justice involvement (e.g., credits earned) is a predictor of future success and school reenrollment upon return to the

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community (Cavendish, 2013), so the provision of educational instruction, services, and supports can be a key factor in improving re-entry outcomes.

Alternative education programs often serve a significant role in the transition of justice-involved youth and warrant consideration with regard to their: (a) governance, administration, staff, and funding; (b) context and policies; (c) curriculum, instruction, and completion options; and (d) services and coordination frameworks with juvenile justice agencies and other community agencies/providers (Atkins, Bullis, & Todis, 2005). Noting the fundamental importance of effective academic and career and technical instruction, research indicates that effective instruction should be "rigorous, relevant, and culturally and linguistically competent; build on prior knowledge, remediate deficits, and motivate new learning; include functional social skills, life skills, decision-making, transition, and career and technical education; and comply with the civil rights laws" (Griller Clark et al., 2016, p. 6).

A recent systematic literature review of school-reentry practices for youth impacted by the juvenile justice system identified evidence-informed practices within school, community, and juvenile justice settings (Kubek et al., 2020). Recommended practices included development of: (a) pre- and post-release interdisciplinary re-entry planning teams, focused on developing student-centered plan based on the young person's strengths and needs; and (b) school-level policies and practices—reflected in development and auditing/revision of school handbooks and codes, as well as professional development frameworks—that focus on proactive rather than punitive responses and incorporate trauma-informed care, restorative justice practices, and school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (Kubek et al., 2020).

INTEGRATING WRAP-AROUND SERVICES AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODELS

Two common models appear in the literature about serving justice-involved youth with disabilities: restorative justice and wrap-around services. Restorative justice models and practices introduce new ways of thinking about and responding to crime, including the importance of understanding the role of environment, and emphasis on the need to repair damage to people, communities, and relationships, including for the justice-involved young person (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1999). Restorative justice and rehabilitative models are increasingly being used to reframe the challenges of justice involvement of youth with disabilities, including efforts to maintain social, educational, and community connections rather than actively removing youth from their community (e.g., school suspension/expulsion), which often funnels youth into the juvenile court and corrections systems.

Both educational policies and practices, as well as service delivery approaches, can benefit from restorative models by emphasizing environmental factors and barriers, alternative supports, settings, and services, and consideration of whether the young person's service needs were being met when an incident occurred (Stenhjem, 2005). For instance, research further

suggests that "the abrupt change from rehabilitation to punishment on or around the eighteenth birthday is arbitrary and has not been effective at deterring future crime…policymakers are encouraged to extend programs for juvenile justice to cover the full range of the transition to adulthood [through age 24], as young people in this age group are likely to be developmentally more similar to adolescents than adults" (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015, sec. 9.1). It should be noted that states determine when youth "age out" of jurisdiction under the juvenile justice system. Generally state juvenile justice systems take cases with defendants under the age of 18, but some states automatically prosecute at age 17, and every state makes exceptions for younger people to be prosecuted as adults in certain situations or for certain offenses (Sawyer, 2019). Some states also define the lower bounds for jurisdiction in the juvenile justice system, or minimum age (Sawyer, 2019). As such, specific policies are needed for transition-age youth and young adults, reflecting both a rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice as well as integration with age-appropriate educational, vocational, mental health, and substance abuse supports and interventions (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015).

Youth with disabilities, especially those involved in the justice system, often need a wide range of individualized supports and services, within their community and also in the event of involuntary placement/settings (Griller Clark et al., 2016). Wrap-around services and supports focus on the early introduction of person-centered, family-involved, and outcomes-oriented collaborations, inside the community (Leone et al., 2002). The wraparound approach is a common service coordination model in other transition and youth/adult services contexts, but often wrap-around teams do not specialize in juvenile justice populations.

Inclusion/involvement of relevant agencies in service oversight and agreements that condense service providers "under one roof" to increase youth/family participation and engagement are recommended practices (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). Some state and local initiatives do provide for wrap-around programs that focus on justice-involved youth and include all systems the youth is involved with as a part of the treatment plan (U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2014). Generally, it is a court-ordered or court-approved service that encourages the involvement of all agencies, with meetings held in the home of the youth and family (OJJDP, 2014). Reports are generated monthly, and if the wrap-around services are court ordered, reports and updates may be required by the court (OJJDP, 2014).

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR SERVING AND SUPPORTING JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Evidence-based practices usually involve addressing risk factors and protective factors with an emphasis on: (a) early identification, intervention, and transition planning; (b) comprehensive, individualized services within collaborative systems; (c) determining specific skill needs—including social skills training—for maintaining positive familial, community, academic, and vocational settings; (d) modifying transition plans in consultation with service providers and families as youth progress or fail to progress; (e) providing services, supports, and opportunities for youth to develop academic, vocational, and social-coping skills; (f) counseling on attitudes, values, and expectations; and (g) incorporating and integrating substance abuse or other related behavioral interventions that co-occur at higher rates in this population (Stenhjem, 2005). Presently, a preponderance of large

Youth and staff at an education and employment services program in MI.

caseloads in probation, child welfare, VR, and other service agencies is a barrier to providing the individualized intensive services for this population, and to providing the space for inter-agency collaborations and coordination to serve youth with complex multiple systems involvement (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015).

Skills-based training and interventions—whether via counseling, classroom instruction, or other training methods—are most effective for justice-involved youth with disabilities; while direct instruction of academic, vocational, and social skills is particularly essential for preventing recidivism (Larson & Turner, 2002). With regard to transition planning, there is a need to implement this across the board for all youth in the transition-age group involved in juvenile justice, and the educational and child welfare systems have existing models for implementing transition plans (e.g., through the IDEA, Fostering Connections Act, and other laws; Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015), but coordination and integration with such plans, where they already exist, is crucial. Among the most important

attributes of effective transition planning is outlining the movement to adult systems.

Nevertheless, the particular situations of each youth can make it challenging to be proactive. For instance, a youth may have a pending placement in a juvenile facility, but then a judge might order that the youth return home and then a new plan will need to be developed. To successfully navigate these challenges, reinforcement systems are needed to: (a) specify goal attainment frameworks; (b) monitor progress and coordination of services via a case manager who is situated within a contextually-appropriate agency; (c) provide proactive/dynamic (rather than reactive/responsive) transition planning and monitoring where early action is always better; and (d) put in place clear procedures for formal inter-agency coordination, communication, resource and information sharing, and modifications to goal planning/sharing plans (Larson & Turner, 2002; Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015).

Additionally, a growing number of agencies and facilities are implementing frameworks for multi-tiered systems of support and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), similar to those used in many educational contexts. PBIS arose from the growing need to respond to the extensive racial disparities in behavioral outcomes for students with, and at-risk for, disabilities (Gadd & Butler, 2019). PBIS focuses on school-wide, non-curricular prevention models aimed at enhancing a school's proactive capacity to address disruptive behavior, by utilizing evidence-based interventions, systems, and procedures for adult behaviors and the manner in which they engage students (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

More specifically, PBIS aim to: (a) address academic/behavioral barriers and

environmental issues within juvenile justice facilities; (b) promote prosocial behaviors; (c) teach replacement behaviors; (d) offer antecedent-focused interventions; and (e) implement continuous progress monitoring (Ennis & Gonsoulin, 2015; Scott, Gagnon, & Nelson, 2008). To implement these measures, staff within the range of juvenile justice settings require training in these interventions. For more information on culturally-responsive practices and PBIS, see the annotated bibliography from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) (Gadd & Butler, 2019).

Holistic assessments that cut across academic, vocational, social, psychological, and community/family engagement needs are paramount within this framework. Researchers note that the majority of existing programs have focused on outcomes related to recidivism, which is not surprising as the primary goal for juvenile justice agencies is to prevent, or guide youth away from, reoffending (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). However, this can lead to neglecting other important outcomes that are predictive of successful community reentry and lower recidivism, including mental health, family, and vocational or educational outcomes (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). Some researchers call for assessment of a more holistic array of outcomes further into adulthood (i.e., up to 5 years after aging out of the juvenile justice system) (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015). However, it is worth noting that many juvenile justice professionals have large, active caseloads that are themselves difficult to manage. In addition, once juvenile records are closed, youth and young adults leaving the system have a right not be in contact or communicate with agencies after their cases have been resolved. Both of these realities lead to practical challenges in implementing this kind of monitoring after case closure.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE JUSTICE INVOLVED OR HAVE OTHER BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Research suggests a range of service delivery practices and considerations for working with youth and young adults with disabilities and other barriers to employment. In this section, we provide ten recommendations for effectively serving youth with disabilities who are justice- or multiple system-involved. Each of these evidence-informed recommendations have potentially important applications for youth involved in juvenile justice who experience other barriers to employment.

Recommendation #1: Be aware that many youth have service needs across a range of domains (e.g., healthcare, education, social services, child welfare, mental health, substance abuse) that go undetected, even while they are engaged with other sectors of care (e.g., special education), and may require specialized services in addition to multi-systemic coordinated care responses (Maschi et al., 2008).

Recommendation #2: Focus on concurrent or sequential services emphasizing the youth's social system (e.g., family and social networks), wherein their primary socio-emotional needs get addressed (Evans-Chase, 2014). These services should align with the court-ordered services.

Recommendation #3: Use the least-restrictive interventions possible when there is a breakdown in individual and/or social environmental factors (e.g., mental health problems, allegations of child maltreatment, parental loss of employment, delinquency). Accomplishing this may require increasing the involvement of other service subsystems, such as child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse (Maschi et al., 2008).

To implement these practices, staff training within juvenile justice settings should focus on how and when to transition youth from more- to less-restrictive settings, including through behavioral interventions and supports that take into account triggers and needed adjustments. As possible, integrate these interventions with restorative justice models that seek to repair and maintain social, educational, and community connections rather than actively removing youth from their community (Zajac, Sheidow, & Davis, 2015).

Recommendation #4: Use a more holistic view of service system involvement and delivery by including all system stakeholders, including youth and their families, professionals from across different sectors of care, as well as community members. This is particularly important with regard to multiple systems-involved youth, where service utilization and effectiveness of treatment can be influenced by non-system factors (Anthony et al., 2010). Expanding state and local efforts to provide for wrap-around programming and services (e.g., family support services) may be one way to achieve this, as well as forging new connections with state agencies that have historically had limited connections with juvenile justice (e.g., vocational rehabilitation).

Recommendation #5: Integrate trauma-informed perspectives in service delivery, as needed, given the high incidence of traumatic events among children involved in multiple service systems (Ko et al., 2008). Provide necessary training and support for staff in juvenile justice settings to understand the impact of trauma on youth, to recognize the potential for both external (environmental) and internal triggers to trauma, and to implement strategies and accommodations related to self-regulation. See the Y-TAC Practice Brief, *Providing Trauma-Informed Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Youth,* for additional guidance.

Recommendation #6: Connect youth to providers of supplemental tutoring and instruction (see, e.g., Lindsay, Hartman & Fellin, 2016 [youth with disabilities]; Foley, 2001 [justice-involved youth]), and vocationally-oriented and supplemental academic training programs geared towards dropout prevention, as well as alternative pathways to graduation (Tanner-Smith & Wilson, 2013). This recommendation requires partnerships with education and employment agencies.

Recommendation #7: Offer different kinds of work experiences through partnerships with VR and employment service providers (in-school and outside of school; paid and unpaid). Work experiences have been associated with positive post-school employment and transition outcomes for youth with barriers to employment like justice involvement (Luecking & Luecking, 2015). Engaging in work-based learning experiences prior to entering the competitive labor market is one of the strongest predictors of job success (Test et al., 2009). Provision of career guidance informed by age-appropriate transition assessments, work-based learning, paid employment, employment/vocational goal development, and long-term connections to community employment-related agencies are also evidence-based practices from the field of transition (Karpur, Brewer, & Golden, 2013).

Recommendation #8: Provide leadership and mentoring programs to help youth develop effective strategic thinking practices, such as anticipating the contexts and people involved in reaching a goal, and strategies for communicating effectively when navigating these contexts (Larson et al., 2014). Adult mentors can help transition-age youth develop strategic thinking skills and understanding of systems relevant to the workplace (Larson et al., 2014). Currently, there exist a range of mentoring programs that juvenile justice agencies partner with,

however, not all youth are eligible for the services or are sometimes placed on a waitlist. As a possible alternative, mentoring service frameworks could be integrated into meetings with a probation officer or case worker.

Recommendation #9: Link youth with providers of supportive services. For systems-involved youth, supportive services are essential components in empowering youth who are transitioning out of foster care or justice settings and seeking work and independent living. Employment and vocational goal development services as well as assistance accessing healthcare, transportation, and other types of supportive services help bridge the transition (Kaplan, Skolnik, & Turnbull, 2009).

Recommendation #10: Connect youth with appropriate follow-up services, across the continuum of services available, to address social/family, work, legal, and any other issues to better position them for long-term, post-treatment success. This has been shown to be particularly important where participants have multiple co-occurring barriers to employment (e.g., disability and substance abuse) (Lusk, Koch & Paul, 2016). Research demonstrates the effectiveness of counseling services (Maynard, Salas-Wright, & Vaughn, 2014), financial literacy training (including an understanding of one's benefits) (Camacho & Hemmeter, 2013), and entrepreneurship programs for youth with disabilities and other barriers to employment (Balcazar et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Youth and transition-aged adults with disabilities are disproportionately involved in the juvenile justice system as compared to their peers without disabilities. To provide the best opportunity for vocational success, community engagement, and well-being, vocational rehabilitation and other service system professionals (e.g., from juvenile justice, foster care, child services, and mental health agencies) need to work collaboratively to address a myriad of needs. By taking a holistic approach that includes a person-centered planning focus—and includes a young person's family, support network, and key systems and community stakeholders—providers gain a better understanding of the youth's experiences, strengths, and needs. Attending not only to disability-related issues, but also cultural, environmental, and systemic factors that influence systems involvement and engagement, increases the likelihood of positive outcomes such as educational attainment, employment, and better health in young adulthood and beyond.

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