



A CALL TO ACTION:

Applying Best Practices for Successful Transformation of Youth Justice

Recognizing the urgent need for reform and improvement in the youth justice system, we, the members of the Transformation of Youth Justice (TYJ) Practice Network, hereby resolve to collectively and proactively work towards transforming youth justice policies and practices that will ensure all youth realize positive outcomes within a consistently fair and just youth justice system.

The TYJ Practice Network, in collaboration with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, presents this resolution as an immediate call to action for **ALL** youth justice professionals.

The TYJ Practice Network is comprised of youth justice pioneers with decades of experience and skill implementing positive change in state and local youth justice systems who recognize the need for impactful change among justice serving agencies to produce improved system performance.

The TYJ Practice Network promotes research-informed, evidence supported practices and approaches applicable within the unique environment and context of every state and local jurisdiction to produce the optimal likelihood of enhanced state and local system performance and positive youth outcomes.

Therefore, the TYJ Practice Network members are committed to providing research-informed, data driven support, coaching, and expert technical assistance in pursuit of enhanced system performance and positive youth outcomes.

The TYJ Practice Network asserts that leadership standards of practice for youth justice professionals must be guided by implementation science and change management skills to achieve sustainable and measurable reform. Continuous learning, coaching, and authentic support are imperative for the development and retention of youth justice professionals.

The TYJ Practice Network asserts that written policy and procedures must be driven by a knowledge and proficiency of application in adolescent brain science and positive youth development.

The TYJ Practice Network asserts that youth justice leaders must include key stakeholders and community justice partners to implement a comprehensive approach to the use of diversion from formal youth justice system involvement. This approach must incorporate research informed behavioral screening and assessment methodologies, including trauma, to ensure connections to appropriate resources to youth and families and amelioration of risk.

The TYJ Practice Network asserts that community members with lived experience in the youth and criminal justice systems are critical partners that provide unique perspectives, credibility, and authentic supports for youth, families, and communities in the quest to produce positive reforms within our youth justice systems.



The TYJ Practice Network declares our commitment to these foundational elements and the following principles to ensure the optimal performance of the youth justice system and to maximize positive outcomes for all youth and families involved in our nation's youth justice systems.

1. Embrace policy-driven collaboration of youth justice system stakeholders.
2. Adopt and implement practices, policies and procedures that are informed by adolescent brain science.
3. Ensure positive youth development (PYD) approaches that recognize the strengths and assets of youth and families are routinely incorporated into case planning and case management.
4. Commit to a risk-needs-responsivity (RNR) model that is incorporated into dispositional recommendations in the courtroom, case plan development, and case management practice.
5. Prioritize attention to youth with co-occurring disorders through commitment to a comprehensive system of behavioral health screening and assessment, including trauma.
6. Adopt a set of policies and practices for alternative responses/diversion from formal involvement in the youth justice system.
7. Implement effective family engagement strategies throughout the youth justice continuum.
8. Utilize a system of graduated responses that relies on a balance of incentives/sanctions to achieve positive behavior change and risk reduction.
9. Adopt early release and successful closure of probation/community supervision terms based on reduction of risk (as indicated by RNR re-assessment) and substantial progress in priority treatment domains.
10. Institute a leadership training and coaching curriculum for youth justice system stakeholders that also focuses on implementation science/change management.
11. Implement continuous quality improvement (CQI) practices to ensure oversight, monitoring, training and coaching for fidelity to documented policy and practice and measurable impact on youth outcomes.
12. Collect and examine data on race/ethnicity, paying special attention to the arrest and detention stages at the front end of the system, and take steps to use data to develop consistent policies and practices that seek to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Supported by the history of credible research and qualitative and quantitative evidence, the TYJ Practice Network asserts that when these foundational elements and principles are interwoven with fidelity into practice at all key decision points by all stakeholders, optimal system performance that is fair and just is achieved thereby producing the greatest likelihood of achieving positive outcomes for all youth.



Signatories

Transformation of Youth Justice Practice Network

Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice

Honorable Sheila Calloway

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