

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**COMMITTEE: JJAC**

**DATE:** Thursday, July 23, 2009

**TIME BEGAN:** 7:30am

**TIME ENDED:** 9:00am

**FACILITATED BY:** Alan Robichaud

**SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

**PRESENT:** Devon Benson, Alicia Morey, Leo Sanfacon, Andre Paquette, Nicole Soroko, Hilary Hartford, Dan French, Martha Douglass, Ray Barrett **STAFF:** Judy Buswell, Alan Robichaud

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1. **Feedback Items from 2008 Case Closing Data** – Stephanie from PSU and consultant to the Council’s Data Project recently reviewed 2008 Case Closing data with the providers of juvenile justice programs. This information shows that Belknap County is doing a good job on several indicators, including victim restitution and community service. However, victim involvement and victim services, integral to restorative justice principles that guide juvenile justice programs in Belknap County, are areas that need improvement. The 2008 Case Closing data show that only 41% of the victims were asked to submit a victim impact statement and of this group (41%), only 39% submitted a statement. Similarly, only 26% of victims were offered Victim-Offender mediation; only 32% of victims were asked to participate in restorative panels; only 7% of offending youth participated in a Victim-Offender Empathy Course; and Victim Satisfaction Surveys were only sent to 4% of the victims.

We need to explore several issues:

- Are we using the right services as part of restoring the victim?
- Does the Case Closing form ask the right questions around victim services?

A lengthy discussion followed and the following points were raised:

- We should be talking with the victim about what he/she needs as part of this restoration process i.e. “Do they: Just want their money back? Or keep the kid out of their yard, or want the youth to get some help.”
- A restorative panel that has a “good victim” can make a big difference to the offender, helping them to gain empathy. There are many different “types” of victims: individuals, municipalities, neighborhoods, businesses etc. We need to know best approaches and practices to use with each of these categories. In cases of shoplifting, some panels are able to include a merchant who can speak to how this type of theft impacts the store and eventually the customers.
- Victims do have a right to know what is happening with their cases right up to the disposition. In extreme cases, such as sexual assault, the victim has the right to know everything.
- Is some type of training for juvenile justice providers on how to communicate with victims needed? The majority felt that this type of information is not needed; however some sort of process/checklist with specific questions to ask victims as a mandatory part of the process should be developed and followed by all providers. The Case Closing form should then ask if the provider asked the victim this specified list of questions. This set of questions could include the other victim-related questions (mediation, impact statement, brochure, victim satisfaction survey etc) that are separately catalogued in the Case Closing Form. Alicia feels that it is very possible to communicate in this fashion with 100% of the victims and that this task should be a responsibility of the provider.

**ACTION: Alicia Morey and Andre Paquette will develop a set of questions to ask the victim which they will then share with Dan French and Martha Douglass for their feedback. These questions will be shared as part of the August JJAC meeting.**

- Youth Assistance Program tries to bring the juvenile offender (shoplifting) to the store to talk with the merchant. However, not all stores (especially the national chains) are interested in any follow-up.

- Delays in processing cases can result in referrals not being made until six or more months after the offense was committed. These delays blunt the intended impact on the juvenile as youth need much more immediate consequences. Most of these processing delays are not intentional but result from the prosecution/police department's need to complete all the investigation. Sometimes referrals are made without sending along the packet of information. This means the provider must request this information, thus further delaying the panel and restitution process. These delays and incomplete occurrences are more frequent in some police departments than others. Smaller departments have more challenges in "getting their paperwork in". Other delays are "situational" and "systemic" and may be caused by vacation schedules or large workloads. These delays "can merit a little reminder". Delays occur during this "pre-court" period but once the case comes into court, there are very precise timelines that must be followed.
- Another ongoing concern is the declining attendance at JJAC meetings. "All the players need to be at the table, which is the way it used to be." Folks should know that JJAC is their meeting, not the Council's. The Council supports and facilitates JJAC, but the agendas and topics discussed should come from JJAC members.
- Does Belknap County need a designated juvenile prosecutor? The group thought that while this could be helpful, there were other concerns such as expecting this one person to attend simultaneous meetings/appearances, something that could then create more "continuances".
- Inappropriate referrals are another concern as they add to delays in the resolution of these cases.
- Should all diversion cases "go to court and appear before a judge"? While sitting before a judge can be a strong deterrent, this extra step would add considerably to the delay. There is also the potential of sending a message to youth that "nothing serious happened by seeing the judge because all they had to do was "some community service".

## 2. Program Updates

- **Adolescent Treatment Initiative** – Hilary Hartford & Nicole Soroko. Referrals are "a bit slow", but this is usual at this time of year. Any referrals can be made to Hilary as she is in the local office each day. ATI staff is preparing a grant application to NH Charitable Foundation for Year Five funding. This Year Five application has sustainability components for year six and beyond.
- **Community Mental Health Funding** – Ray Barrett, Genesis The \$98 million allocated by the State for all ten mental health centers has been cut by \$4 million, which will mean reduced funds to each center, including Genesis. At this point, Genesis has no specific information on how this will impact them. At this point, they do not plan to cut the number of clients or programs. It appears the premise from the state is that the client base will remain stable; however, this does not apply to Genesis who has experienced a rise in clients, no doubt due to the stress imposed by the economy. Genesis already has a month waiting list and is trying to streamline the process to trim this period. Fortunately, right now Genesis is at full staff with little turnover.
- **Division of Juvenile Justice Services** – Dan French Regarding the impact of budget cuts on DJJS, the Union and Governor's Office "are talking," but nothing has been finalized or implemented. Department heads are preparing new budget scenarios and plans.
- **State Advisory Grant (Juvenile Justice)** – Alan Robichaud The current SAG grant to the Council that has funded the Juvenile Justice Data Project will be finishing its third and last year on September 30. As Alan would like to make the best use of the remaining time of the PSU project consultants, Stephanie Halter and Scott Meyer, anyone with thoughts about remaining data needs should share those with Alan as soon as possible. The Council is talking with PSU about strategies for PSU pursuing grants for similar college-community collaborations.

The next SAG RFP will be released this fall and has three priority areas: (1) mental health issues (2) alternatives to juvenile detention (3) disproportionate minority findings. Could these SAG funds support any anticipated collaborative projects? Some ideas shared include:

- Use these funds to support the Youth Services Bureau – Restorative Justice program merger. It is very important to support court diversion in Belknap County.
- Assistance with mental health interventions, perhaps in combination with substance abuse issues.
- Funds to support the care of mentally incompetent CHINS cases currently managed by the JPPOs. What might happen in the community to help these kids?
- Can these ideas be combined with the diversion merger in some fashion to produce a grant-worthy proposal?

**ACTION: Anyone with additional ideas for a particular focus for the next round of SAG funds should contact Alan asap.**

- **PSU Internships** The Council is interested in encouraging Internships in Belknap County with Criminal Justice students from PSU. Those already using PSU interns include Laconia DO JPPOs; Genesis Behavioral Health, and the Youth Assistance Program.
- **Substance Abuse/Mental Health Trainings** JJAC members thought there would be interest, especially from police departments, in strategies for appropriately managing and referring juveniles who have apparent substance abuse and mental health issues.
- **Winnisquam Regional School District Update – Emailed by Sandra St. Gelais** “WRSD 2009/2010 school year reflects movement in administration. We have "brand new" principal and A.P. @ the high school, the 2 previous spent 2 yrs. w/the high school/district. New principal, Dr.Ronna Cadarette, moving over from the middle school where she was the A.P. for 1 year. A.P. is Mark Christensen coming in from Plymouth School District. New A.P. @ middle school is Shannon Kruger, having moved up from the role as Behavior Specialist. New principal @ Sanb. is Mike LaChapelle, moving over from the h.s. as the past A.P. Phew....how confusing...New Special Ed. Director, Lori Krueger from Laconia. The school district "cut" the District social worker and the "school to work teacher/Job coach" from the budget this year. It is most difficult to get a position "back" once it has been eliminated. The New admin at the high school has requested a mtg. w/Chief Cormier, and the supt. There is need for role clarification of the SRO. On-going confusion around who supervises the SRO during the school day....the Chief, or the principal. Conversation also re: specific job description. AND can the Chief pull the SRO at will for dept. duties.”

- 3. JJAC Meeting Times Etc** In the interest of attracting a larger number of attendees at future JJAC meetings, it was suggested that changing the meeting start time to 8:30am would allow those who had early morning family responsibilities to attend. We need to do more work to get “the necessary folks back at the table.” Everyone present was asked to contact another person who should be in attendance.

<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	
<b>WHEN:</b>	<b>Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> 8:30-10:00 AM</b>
<b>WHERE:</b>	<b>Belknap County Cooperative Extension Wing, County Complex , Laconia</b>